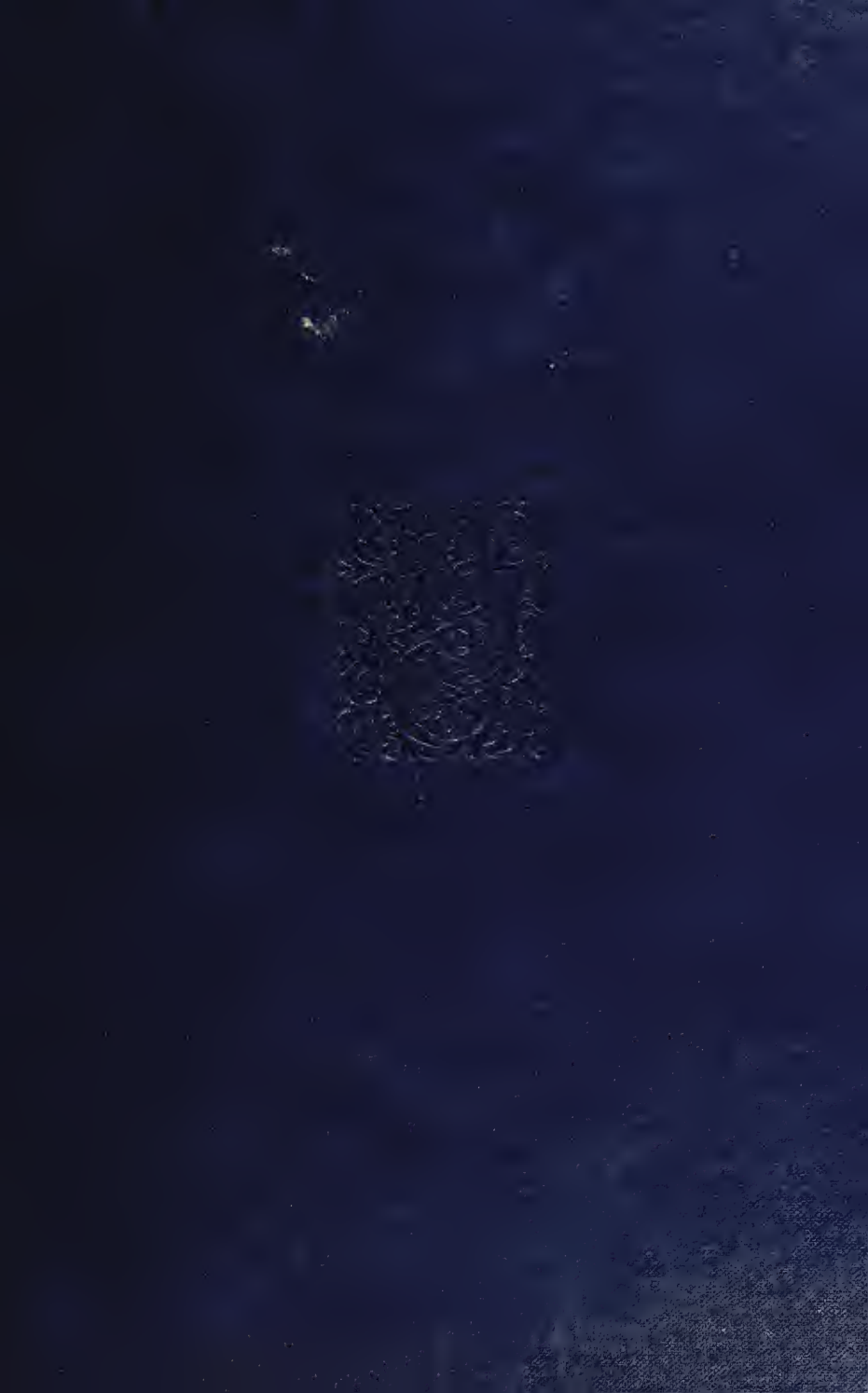

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THE
GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

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EDITOR OF "THE EXPOSITORY TIMES" "THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE" "THE DICTIONARY OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS" AND "THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS"

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Another Good Reckoning.

I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.—Rom. viii. 18.

1. The Bible never speaks despondingly about the future. If it has a becoming sense of the magnitude of the task of life, that is only the reverence of a great artist, nerving himself to accomplish some far-reaching design. The struggle and the stress are prophecies that the final consummation will be something greater than heart has conceived. Apostles and prophets alike, quickened by the spirit of inspiration, look across the ages to the last result, and never hesitate to declare that that result will amply compensate for all the toil and suffering. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward."

2. "I reckon," says the Apostle, as if he had deliberately weighed the one against the other, and had come to this conclusion, "I *reckon* that the sufferings of this present conflict are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in and upon us." In the groans of Nature, the groans of Humanity, the groans of the Spirit of God within us, he detects tones which prove them to be groans of travail, of the birth-pangs which precede and foretell the advent of a new, purer, happier life; and he declares that, when this wondrous birth of time arrives, all groaning and pain shall be forgotten in the joy of the new better man, the new better humanity, that has come into the world. And, finally, rising into a dithyrambic fervour, he sings of the Divine fatherly Love which is ever at work for our redemption, as a Love from which nothing can separate us—neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, neither famine nor nakedness, peril nor sword, in the present age, nor angels, nor

principalities, nor powers, nor any other and new creation into which we may pass in the ages to come.

¶ The Apostle does not say, "I know," for this might imply that he had fully experienced or realized both the sufferings and the glory. At the time of which he speaks he had not done this. He had not drained to the bottom the cup of earthly sorrow, and he had but tasted the cup of heavenly joy. But neither does he say, "I think or conjecture that the suffering is not worthy to be weighed with the glory"; for this would imply less than he had realized. Although he knew not the whole, he knew a great deal of the suffering, and not a little of the glory too. If "I know" would have been too strong, "I think" would have been too weak. "I reckon" is the language of faith, which is partly knowledge and partly anticipation; which accepts its present experience: which neither stands still upon the earth, content with the bare facts of life or husk of things, nor stares vaguely into heaven in mere passive expectation; but it is a pilgrimage between earth and heaven. Faith is the journey of the soul between the realized and the unrealized. It is ever leaving the actual behind and reaching forth to the ideal—never satisfied until it finds in the ideal the Eternal Real.[1]

3. It is a mathematical sum. "I reckon," he says. And it must be admitted that no man that ever lived was more capable of working out this sum than this Apostle. On the one hand, he has given us, in the eleventh chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, a sketch of his own sufferings, such as, perhaps, the experience of no other mortal man could match. On the other hand, he had held personal converse with the Lord Jesus Christ; he is able to tell of "the abundance of his revelations"; already he had been "caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Who, then, was so fit as St. Paul—in the wonderful contrast of his unparalleled life—to put the two together, and to decide the contrast?

¶ In sufferings, who has come up to the Apostle? In revelations of the things which God has prepared for them that love Him, who has been equally honoured? When he wrote of the sufferings of this present time, he was not reclining on the couch of luxury and imagining the lot of the afflicted. He was in and surrounded by those very sufferings. In perils from his own

[1] F. Ferguson.

countrymen, and in perils from false brethren, he was working with his own hands for his daily bread in the wealthy and dissolute Corinth. He bore about with him that thorn in the flesh, which, however difficult it may be for us to assign its nature, we know was the messenger of Satan to buffet him: which, with all his zeal, all the wonders and signs of an Apostle wrought by him, rendered his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible. Day by day he entered deeper than other men into that inward conflict between the good which he would do but could not, and the evil which he would not do but did. Of a character wonderfully susceptible and habitually introspective, he had, besides, his spiritual faculties penetrated and intensified by the abiding and indwelling Spirit of God, given him for his apostolic work. Mighty was He that wrought in him—weak and frail the earthen vessel by which that energy must be sustained. We hear him speak of bearing about death, of daily dying; we hear him crying out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Truly, in sufferings, without and within, but One ever surpassed him—that Divine Master whom he followed, and of whom he says in his fervour that he fills up that which is lacking of His sufferings for the sake of the Church which is His body.[1]

I think man's great capacity for pain
  Proves his immortal birthright. I am sure
No merely human mind could bear the strain
  Of some tremendous sorrows we endure.

Art's most ingenious breastworks fail at length,
  Beat by the mighty billows of the sea;
Only the God-formed shores possess the strength
  To stand before their onslaughts, and not flee.

The structure that we build with careful toil,
  The tempest lays in ruins in an hour;
While some grand tree that springs forth from the soil
  Is bended but not broken by its power.

Unless our souls had root in soil divine
  We could not bear earth's overwhelming strife.
The fiercest pain that racks this heart of mine
  Convinces me of everlasting life

[1] Henry Alford.

I.

The Sufferings of this Present Time.

There is perhaps no argument so frequently used against Christianity at the present day, or with such force, as the argument that the pain and misery of the world are irreconcilable with a God who is both good and powerful. Never was there an age so sensitive to pain as our own, and never an age therefore that found it so hard to reconcile the existence of pain with the love of God. Professor Huxley used to declare that his reason for rejecting the Christian creed was simply that he could not find in Nature the God of infinite love of which the New Testament speaks. The difficulties of miracles and the science of Genesis were nothing in comparison with "the impassable gulf between the anthropomorphism, however refined, of theology and the passionless impersonality of the Unknown and Unknowable which science shows in nature." If other difficulties have slain the faith of thousands, the fact of pain has slain the faith of tens of thousands.

i. The Fact of Pain.

St. Paul admits, he insists on, the pain, the waste, the imperfection, the bondage to vanity and corruption, to be found both in Nature and in Man. He depicts them in even darker colours than the materialist or the sceptic. And yet he aids us to bear the burden which seems intolerable. For he does not charge the evil that is in the world to any defect either in the power or in the goodness of the Maker of the world. He charges it, rather to the self-will, the depravity, of man; as indeed we ourselves do when in our common talk we say, "The world would be a very good world if only men were good enough to live in it." Like Schopenhauer, he says, "The world is what men have made it," and hence "the world is itself the judgment of the world."

Are we offended at the cruelties of society? St. Paul knows them fully. "Filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, back-biters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affec-

tion, unmerciful." Are we perplexed because Christ has added to the world's pain, and in the name of His Cross blood has been shed in torrents? "If we suffer with him." Do we suppose that the physical agony of the brute creation is a modern discovery? "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." As it has been said, "Here we have, as nowhere else in the Bible, perhaps nowhere else in ancient literature, a man who feels the pain of creation." And this man, one of the world's greatest intellects, who knew the whole world's anguish, nevertheless declares throughout the whole Epistle that God is love. It is something at least to know that he knew all the facts.

¶ Overmastering pain—the most deadly and tragical element in life—alas! pain has its own way with all of us; it breaks in, a rude visitant, upon the fairy garden where the child wanders in a dream, no less surely than it rules upon the field of battle, or sends the immortal war-god whimpering to his father; and innocence, no more than philosophy, can protect us from this sting.[1]

1. St. Paul had abundant personal experience of suffering. He was a Jew outside the pale of Jews. He was a pariah among pariahs. The very Jews would not associate with him. He was "hated of all men for Christ's name's sake." And, if in all the ranks of this hated subdivision of a sect there was one man who could be sensible of the scorn which was poured upon him, that man was the writer of these words. Born of the very bluest blood of Judaism—a Jew among Jews—educated as a conservative and a high churchman, with that bitter scorn of dissenters from his faith which then as now was the special mark of orthodox high breeding, he had come to be a dissenter among dissenters; not only a Christian but an advocate of opinions which among Christians themselves were unpopular and proscribed. "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. . . . We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." And there was not only moral but also physical torture. Wherever the ecclesiastical courts of his countrymen had jurisdiction, he received the "stripes" of a heretic. Wherever the civil courts of the Roman

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Child's Play*.

government took cognizance of him, he was "beaten" with the lictor's "rods" as a disturber of the peace. There was death in front; there was ignominy and torture on either hand; there was that terrible mingling of moral humiliation with physical pain which to a sensitive nature like St. Paul's is a thousand times worse than the agony of dying.[1]

2. In all times men have been born to sorrow. The history of our race is a history of pain. Nor is it certain that, as history has gone on, the pain has lessened. We hear from time to time of the alleviations of suffering which have marked the advance of civilization. We live in an age in which the effort to alleviate suffering forms a distinct feature in the organization of society. We cannot look at the photograph of contemporary life which is contained in a daily newspaper without seeing that benevolent institutions and social improvements occupy a large place in the thoughts and efforts of civilized mankind. But, for all that, the doubt remains whether the sum total of human misery has not increased. It would almost seem as though the onward march of civilization slays its thousands and maims its ten thousands. It is almost inevitable that it should be so. The whole machinery of society is so constructed as to make the difference between rich and poor wider as civilization increases. Wealth tends to accumulate in fewer hands. There is consequently not only a multiplication of the number of the poor, but a deepening of their poverty. The fact is so serious, and is becoming so prominent, that many of those who contemplate social phenomena from a scientific point of view regard it with undisguised alarm. Nor is its significance lessened by the fact that the newest of all philosophies is a philosophy of pessimism, a philosophy which is based on the conviction that we are going from bad to worse.

3. But we must not exaggerate the amount of suffering in the world. We cannot be blind to its existence; it meets us in every direction, and it seems startling to be told by science that it is inseparably bound up in the existence of the lowest forms of life. Yet this is one of those vivid statements that seem to mean much more than they really do. If it means that some portion of pain is the lot of every living thing, that is quite true.

[1] Edwin Hatch.

But if it conveys the notion that the pain predominates over pleasure, that is utterly false—that is a libel on God's creation, whose "tender mercies are over all his works." The generalization of Herbert Spencer is at once far truer and far more extended, and his conclusion is that the supreme law under which every creature is placed is what amounts to a law of love. Pleasures, he says, attend a creature, an organism, when it does what is good for it, what will promote its growth, develop its organization, increase the sum total of its happiness; and pains attend it when it is moving along hurtful lines, when it is spending its energy too quickly, when it is diminishing the sum of its enjoyment, which pains are only the precursors of greater pains if it will persist in going along that hurtful path. Thus all pains are only like little pricks which push off and deter a creature from harm, whilst all pleasures are like gentle incentives and loving encouragements for it to persevere in the way that will bring it the largest measure of delight.

Ye know not why God hath joined the horse-fly unto the horse,
Nor why the generous steed is yoked with the poisonous fly:
Lest the steed should sink into ease and lose his fervour of nerve
God hath appointed him this: a lustful and venomous bride.

Never supine lie they, the steeds of our folk, to the sting,
Praying for deadness of nerve, their wounds the shame of the sun;
They strive, but they strive for this: the fulness of passionate nerve;
They pant, but they pant for this: the speed that outstrips the pain.

Sons of the dust, ye have stung: there is darkness upon my soul.
Sons of the dust, ye have stung: yea, stung to the roots of my heart.
But I have said in my breast: the birth succeeds to the pang,
And sons of the dust, behold, your malice becomes my song.[1]

4. The great point to notice is that there are other facts in life which must be taken into account as well as sorrow. Pro-

[1] Padraic Colum, *Arab Songs.*

fessor Huxley spoke of the "Passionless Impersonality" which was all that he could find in nature. Had he never seen a mother? Is motherhood passionless? Motherhood is as much a part of the universe and a creation of its Creator as pain. That is what we have to recognize—this world is a problem, a mystery, not a simplicity. It is not that life is full of suffering and suffering only, and that this is the worst of all possible worlds. There would be no problem then—that would be simple enough. The mystery is that there is both justice and injustice, both pain and joy, both agony and love. There is the storm that hurries with fire and ruin over sea and land, and the pessimist says, "God is cruel." But there are flowers by the wayside to contradict him. We have to account for the whole of the facts. How can we reconcile them? What shall we say? Shall we say that God is working out a glory in comparison with which the sorrows of this present are not worthy to be compared? Or shall we say that He is an "Infinite Indifference" who lighted by chance on the sweetness of human friendship and the rich cornfields and the splendours of the day and the night? Surely love is the easier solution, for these things are too great to be the creation of chance.

¶ God loves and cares for the meanest creatures more tenderly, more gently, than the sweetest mother ever cared for her firstborn son. His arrangements for the happiness of everything that He has made are so large, so delicate, so considerate, so thoughtful, in a word so fatherly, that anything we know of earthly care and tenderness is only hard and unfeeling by its side. His love for the lowest zoophyte has led Him to do far more to promote its happiness than we have ever thought of doing for the one we love best.[1]

¶ A pessimistic novel of our day closes with the sentence, "The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess." But if the creed of the novel be true, we do not know that the sport is finished. If God has tortured us here, in all likelihood He will torture us hereafter. This may be the first of an endless series of torture chambers of increasing agony and woe. And the awful possibilities of disaster that loom before the imagination are horrible beyond description. But, as a matter of fact, we are not afraid. Why? Because we know that the joy of life is greater than the pain. Why not be honest? There is

[1] W. D. Ground.

nothing here that makes impossible the faith that God is love—no sorrow that is too bitter for atoning.[1]

ii. The Reason for Pain.

1. There are two great reasons for the presence of suffering in the world and in human lives.

(1) At the root of this mystery of suffering lies the mystery of sacrifice. St. Paul lays down for us its principles: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Notice that word "therefore"—as a consequence of all that has gone before, the deep, and almost abstruse, argument about the relationship of God to man. Here is its result. God's love, God's power of sanctification, God's redemption of man, issues in a living sacrifice of man to God; a giving up, a crucifying, of self and many cherished plans and hopes.

It is our reasonable service, the only tribute that a being with thought and understanding can make to the All-loving and All-merciful Father. Do not let us mistake the meaning of these words. They do not mean merely that we must give up wickedness, however much we love it; we must overcome the temptation to do wrong whenever it assails us. That, of course, is true, for these things are poison to the soul. But a man cannot live by merely avoiding poison. Sacrifice is a deeper thing than that. It penetrates into the inmost being, and demands self. It bids us give up things lawful because they are not always things expedient. Just as the man who is eager about his business life has to forgo ease and comfort, and often amusement, absolutely innocent things in themselves, but dangerous where misplaced, so we have to overcome by taking up our cross and following Him. If the innocent pleasure is misplaced, the cry of nature after it must be stifled, for they who seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness must learn the science of placing all things where God would have them. This effort means sacrifice—how hard the sacrifice is none can know till they begin to learn by experience. It is that plucking out of the offending eye, that cutting off of the offending hand, which our Lord in vivid imagery

[1] E. A. French.

speaks of as the principle by which the whole body is saved from destruction.

¶ Not merely the St. Peters and St. Pauls whose lives are high and wonderful beyond anything we see in our own, but plain, simple-minded men and women like ourselves, those who have learned, perhaps, to love the world and its plans and gains as well as we have, God has called over and over again to their true, highest self by the voices of disappointment and pain. In one sense it is the recorded opinion of shrewd, observant men. Some years ago one who was a notoriously shrewd judge of character said that in his experience he found men's characters spoiled by prosperity and unspoiled by reverses. He mentioned one who had risen to high honour as a signal instance, I think he said the only instance he could recall, of a man absolutely unspoiled by success. That was the testimony of one who did not profess to speak of it from the point of view of spiritual discipline, but as an obvious fact of everyday experience. How infinitely more striking when we place side by side with that remark the plain, simple story of a poor woman lying in an East-End Hospital, suffering the agonies of one of the most painful diseases that baffle human skill. In her last moments she said to the clergyman who stood by her bedside: "I am so happy; I never knew what real happiness was until this last fortnight." The story of the "Man of Sorrows" had illuminated the dark mystery of pain, and revealed its meaning.[1]

¶ William Archer, reviewing a book by Robert Louis Stevenson, declared that Stevenson's philosophy would break down with sickness. Yet at the very time Stevenson was a great sufferer and forbidden to speak for days, even for weeks. Afterwards he wrote to his critic, "I see a universe I suppose eternally different from yours—a solemn, a terrible, but a very joyous and noble universe, where suffering is not wantonly inflicted, though it falls with dispassionate impartiality, but where it may be and generally is nobly borne, where, above all, any brave man may make out a life which shall be happy for himself, and, by being so, beneficent to those about him."

I wait, in His good time to see
That as my mother dealt with me
So with His children dealeth He.

I bow myself beneath His hand:
That pain itself was wisely planned
I feel and partly understand.

[1] E. J. Purchase.

The joy that comes in sorrow's guise,
The sweet pains of self-sacrifice,
I would not have them otherwise.[1]

(2) The second reason for the presence of pain is that there are some things that are better than pleasure, things that enter into a far higher realm; and, in order to bring these nobler matters into existence, in order to provide for them a sphere in which they can grow and develop, it is in accordance with the most tender love to inflict a certain amount of pain. God has a great design, a design as wide as the universe, filling all time, a design to compass which He began to work untold millions of ages ago. Slowly He has laid the ascending courses; every organism has somehow entered into it, been a necessary part of it. This design was to provide a scaffolding on which man could stand, could be trained and educated, until in the "fulness of the time" he should be prepared for the Christ, could then behold His glory, be overcome by His beauty, and be changed into His likeness. And this end God saw to be so Divine that He felt justified, in order to attain it, in asking everything to suffer somewhat, taking care to make each one an abundant compensation. He is like some great contriver of earth, who has a large design needing many workers, and who takes care to be a generous master, paying liberally for every service that is rendered.

And now my grief I see
Was but that ancient shadow part of me,
Not yet attuned to good,
Still blind and senseless in its warring mood,
I turn from it and climb
To the heroic spirit of the prime,
The light that well foreknew
All the dark ways that it must journey through.
Yet seeing still a gain,
A distant glory o'er the hills of pain,
Through all that chaos wild
A breath as gentle as a little child,
Through earth transformed, divine,
The Christ-soul of the universe to shine.[2]

2. These two reasons—sacrifice and discipline—are summed up in the Apostle's word "glory." And we are led to consider

[1] Whittier. [2] "A. E.," *The Divine Vision.*

what is involved in "the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." But before doing so we might notice that the gain of suffering is not all kept for the life that is to come. We can believe that the suffering of men is working out such a glory because even in this earthly life sorrow and pain work out a glory that is worth the price. Take, for example, Dante, the Italian man of sorrows. Denied the woman he loved, driven an exile from his native land, sentenced to be burned alive, left alone, astonished amid the agony of life—yet but for this he had never written his poem. As Carlyle has said, had Dante not suffered, "Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor, and the ten dumb centuries continued voiceless." Give him the choice of his happiness! He knew not, more than we do, what was really happy, what was really miserable. The song was worth the price.

¶ The world is full of beauty and joy; full, too, of suffering and pain. Suffer we must, each one of us. What shall we gain by it? Shall we suffer so that, when the pain has swept by, it leaves us nothing but the spirit of rebellion, the angry feeling of helpless despair? Or shall we suffer so that even our darkest moments are times of victory, so that out of the pain and anguish come God's beautiful gifts that can turn sorrow into joy? That is the question we have to ask ourselves. Shall it be triumph or despair? Often enough we shall have to choose suffering, deliberately choose it, as the escape from defeat and despair. When sin has laid its defiling touch upon us, and there lie before us the two ways—the way of easy acquiescence in evil as inevitable, and the nobler, harder way of godly sorrow—we dare not hesitate; and this is but the picture of what God calls us to in the school of brave endurance where we are being trained, where the way of ease is the way of danger, and the pathway of the Cross the road to victory.[1]

And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two;
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder, and dew;
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air;
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock is fair.
Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain;
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.[2]

[1] E. J. Purchase.

[2] R. L. Stevenson, *Songs of Travel*.

II.

The Glory that is to be Revealed.

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward." Just like the mist that in the early morning hangs dark, damp, and depressing round the earth, but in the evening has been lifted into the blue sky, and is irradiated with a dazzling light, so the present sorrow will be even beautiful when the glory has been revealed. If the glory cannot come without the pain, it is not unloving to inflict the pain. This is, it is true, only a practical solution of the problem. But the Bible meets only our practical needs. It does not tell us why pain is the way to glory—it tells us only that "God is love." It is not strange that the suffering should now seem very great. For

> Here alone
> Is given thee to suffer for God's sake.
> In other worlds we shall more perfectly
> Serve Him and love Him, praise Him, work for Him,
> Grow nearer and nearer Him with all delight;
> But then we shall not any more be called
> To suffer, which is our appointment here.
> Let us take heed in time
> That God may now be glorified in us;
> And while we suffer, let us set our souls
> To suffer perfectly; since this alone
> The suffering which is this world's special grace
> May here be perfected and left behind.

¶ What a wonderful and illuminating thought it is when once we practically apply it! For where is the burden of the mystery of life if we not only hope for an immortality in which all the ravelled skeins of time will be pulled straight, but know that all the enravelment of this life, all its strange blending of evil with good, of sorrow with joy, of loss with gain, is intended to exercise us in discrimination, in manliness, in moral capacity and fervour and breadth; intended, therefore, for a discipline by which we shall be educated and made meet for the glory of a future life in which, redeemed from every bond of imperfection, every taint of corruption, we shall rise into an untrammelled freedom, a growing perfection, an eternal usefulness which shall also be an eternal joy? If this be verily so, if we are at last to learn once for all

that our wills are ours that we may make them God's, and so may ever see our will done both in heaven and on earth, may not we conclude, with the Apostle, "I deliberately reckon, I am fully persuaded, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in and upon us"?[1]

i. The Glory.

1. We might have expected joy to be placed over against suffering. It is glory, the perfection of our being—the blessedness of God. And what is glory? It is a vague word to many of us. But this passage may serve to clear it up. Glory is the manifestation of excellence. Applied to God, as in the phrase so common in Scripture, "the glory of God," it means the manifestation of what God is, whether in power, or in wisdom, or in goodness, or in all of these together. Applied to men, to Christian men, in the sense here designed, it means the manifestation hereafter of what they are, not in themselves—for that could only be the exhibition of weakness, faultiness, and sinfulness—but in their relation to God as His children, to Christ as His redeemed, to the Holy Spirit as His dwelling-place and His temple.

2. We cannot in our present state say much about this glory. Our words are apt to darken rather than brighten the simple statement of the text. "Now we see through a glass, darkly," and "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." But we are not, therefore, forbidden to think and speak of the future. If it is right to set our affection on heavenly things, it cannot be wrong to set our thoughts upon them too.

(1) We think of the glory of saved men as different from that of angels. The one is the brightness of robes never stained with sin; the other the brightness of those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. The one is the glory of those who have been born to wealth; the other that of those who from poverty have been made rich. The one is born in a palace; the other is taken from a pit, and, by the grace of God, led up to empire. It is the glory of a complete triumph over sin.

(2) Then there is the glory of the Judgment Day—of standing at the right hand of God, of being acknowledged as His own

[1] S. Cox.

before heaven and earth and hell, of God Himself being glorified, and His way fully justified in our redemption. Who would compare the slanders of the wicked with such a recognition? Who would speak of the disgrace of the cross in view of such an honour?

(3) Involved in all this, and indeed but the figure or shadow of it, is the glory that literally shall be revealed *in us*. The glory of perfect conformity to Christ. The unfathomable blessedness of being altogether one with God—partaking of His strength and beauty, His freedom and eternity; enjoying at once the highest liberty and obeying the highest law; being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

¶ How sparing the Holy Ghost is in the description of future glory! How chaste, if I may so speak, is He in depicting the future triumphs of the saints! It is well known by accurate observers of human nature that there is no one thing that would sooner wear out the frame and mind of man than exquisite enjoyment; and God, in mercy to our frail nature, has been sparing as to future scenes. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," says Jesus to His disciples. So our God has many joys, much glory, much enjoyment for us; but we cannot bear it now; and so He puts it off until we attain to the maturity of manhood, and then the eternal weight of glory shall be revealed in us (or, as in the original, towards us, which, of course, means for our benefit). Sufferings are depressing, but glory hereafter will be exalting. Sufferings are disheartening, but glory will be exhilarating. Sufferings darken and sadden the countenance, but glory hereafter will brighten it. What is that glory, people of God? Do you believe it? Just as certainly as that the Man of Sorrows is now on a throne of joy—as certainly as that He who was crowned with the crown of thorns is now in the glory of His Father—so all the children of God shall, like Him, be crowned. As He has entered into His rest, where death has no more dominion over Him, so shall all the people of God for ever!—for He is the Head, and they are the members. Where the Head is, there shall also His members be.[1]

Be comforted, be comforted,
Ye tempest-tossed and worn,
Who wait amid the shadows
For hope's celestial morn!

[1] J. Gregg.

The valley hath its burden,
  Its vision, and its song,
And strains of joy are wafted
  From heaven's immortal throng.

He makes my windows agates,
  That I may dimly see
The glories that await me,
  The joys prepared for me.
Oh, were the full effulgence
  To break upon my sight,
My spirit were too eager
  To take its upward flight!

Through mists of tears the bulwarks
  Of Zion's City rise;
I greet its pearly portals,
  Its jasper meets mine eyes;
A mystic glory lightens it,
  It shines upon my road,
And through my agate windows
  My heart exults in God!

ii. The Greatness of the Glory.

1. We have seen how great were the sufferings of this Apostle. Yet the mere mention of the sufferings and the glory together suggests that the former is unworthy of comparison with the latter. The magnanimity of St. Paul prevents him from dragging his afflictions into comparison with the glory of God. It is the mark of a great soul in every sphere of life to suffer quietly in the way of truth, and make no parade or comparison of its sufferings with the glory of the end for which it suffers. The thought that in any degree he had paid for the glory would be an offence. He does not strike a balance with mercenary spirit between what he gives and what he receives. If he makes any comparison at all, it is to show that his sufferings are part of the glory—that his wounds are his brightest ornaments; as the scars on the body of Jesus become shining tokens to all eternity of a love and valour that cast away self, and triumphed over death. The Apostle cares not to compare the prospect before him with the dark and rugged way that leads to it. The memory of past hardships is all but swallowed up in the

enthusiasm of hope; and in this he follows his Master, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame."

¶ Do you feel you suffer more than others? Then remember that you can estimate better than others how great the glory will be. For the glory will be greater than the sufferings. Others measure the city of gold with the "measure of a man," you with the "measure of an angel." Remember that, whatever you have lost, you have gained a clearer vision of the glory that shall be. And through your sorrows you may also know God better. For sorrow is a revelation of God. Dr. Dale lost a little child, and years after, writing to comfort a friend, he said, "I learnt what God must feel at the loss of His children." A lady once told me of the experience which led her to Christ. Her husband was very unkind to her and her life was very hard. But she had a little boy whom she dearly loved. One day he had committed some childish fault, and she felt it her duty to punish him for the first time in his life. It was agony to her to do it. And it suddenly flashed into her mind that she who had always thought God hard had misunderstood Him, that it must be infinitely greater pain to God to send her pain than for her to bear it. And, looking up through the sorrows that revealed the heart of God, she gave herself up to the love that dares to wound so deeply because it so truly loves.[1]

2. How is it that the glory is so manifestly greater than the pain?

(1) Because the sufferings are necessarily physical, or if mental, they have a physical side. The "glory revealed in us" is character, spiritual excellence, likeness to God. It is easy to see, then, that any amount of pain and loss that may come to us in the few short years of this mortal life cannot for a moment compare with a moral greatness that has been by that means acquired, a moral greatness which will continue for ever.

(2) Because suffering affects only our happiness, but the glory secures our holiness. The work which God undertakes for us is the most sublime that can be conceived. That task is to make men anew after the likeness of God; and if God is the most glorious Being in the universe, then obviously to make a man like Him must be a work the like of which cannot elsewhere be found.

[1] E. A. French.

(3) Because the suffering is for a time and the glory is for ever. There is something in goodness that is so intrinsically noble that, even if it continued but for this life, if men were only brightly coloured bubbles on the sea of time, yet to produce one great and good man would be worth any toil, and all true artists would say so; but when those splendours of righteous character are but feeble prophecies of a glory that our little faculties cannot conceive, which glory is to continue for ever, why, then, those toils receive a still nobler recompense.

¶ There is another passage similar to this in its course of reasoning. It is the account of Moses in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer is describing Moses making his choice between the world and Christ. Now see how he loads the scales. On the world's side, pleasures and treasures; on Christ's side, reproaches and afflictions. Surely the world is best! But now mark how he re-adjusts the balance. With the world's pleasures and treasures he throws in "for a season"; with the reproaches and afflictions he casts in "with the people of God"; and in a moment the world kicks the beam—"choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

I'm wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John,
And, oh! we grudg'd her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear's that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,

That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
Oh! dry your glist'ning e'e, John,
My saul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

Oh, haud ye leal and true, John,
Your day it's wearin' thro', John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare ye weel, my ain John,
This warld's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain
In the land o' the leal.[1]

3. This power of a great hope may become the power of a great temptation. This dream of a glory to be revealed has played a baneful as well as a beneficial part in the history of Christianity. As long as we ourselves do not feel the misery of life, but only contemplate it from outside, there is nothing easier than to sit with folded hands, looking away from the wretchedness at our feet to the sunlit cloudland of the future. It has been the temptation of many men, and even of many good men, in all ages. It is this that underlies the tendency to monasticism, which fills so large a place in Christian history, and which is not wholly absent from us now. There were monks who felt as keenly as any of us could feel the misery and wickedness which surrounded them, and who painted, in more glowing colours than any one before or since has painted, the glory of the Jerusalem that is to come, and yet who made no single effort to lessen the misery or to bring the glory nearer. There are men among us still who, though not monks, but entangled in the network of common life, take the misery that they find there as an inevitable element of it, and wait in unmoving acquiescence, if not in placid self-satisfaction, until God sends some change. But this, so far from being hope, is rather its paralysis; for hope that does nothing is not hope, but an idle dream.

On the other hand, the power of a great hope may become the power of a great motive. There are few among us whose lives

[1] Lady Nairne.

have not an element of sadness. For all of us the consolations of the future are still needed. But, if they come to us at all, they should come as a motive power; they should help to shape our character. It was so with St. Paul. His conception of the glory which should be revealed was not, as we have seen, so much a complete change in external circumstances as a change of the spirit and the inner life. It was a change of character and a change of power. It was the final victory of the spirit over the flesh. It involved the obligation to work towards it by new efforts after spiritual life. This is never lost sight of: "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Again, after speaking of the earthly and the heavenly tabernacle, and of mortality being swallowed up in life, his inference is, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." And again, St. John, after speaking of the same hope of immortality, adds, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." That is a lesson which we may all take home. The life after the Spirit, the communion with God, the realization in our own characters of the character of Christ, which are the elements of the glory of the life to come, must have their beginnings in this present life below. In the struggle which this involves we may be content to live, for in the hope which it brings we may be glad to die.

Hope evermore and believe, O man, for e'en as thy thought
So are the things that thou see'st; e'en as thy hope and belief.
Cowardly art thou and timid? they rise to provoke thee against them.
Hast thou courage? enough, see them exulting to yield.
Yea, the rough rock, the dull earth, the wild sea's furying waters,
(Violent say'st thou and hard, mighty thou think'st to destroy),
All with ineffable longing are waiting their Invader,
All, with one varying voice, call to him, Come and subdue;
Still for their Conqueror call, and but for the joy of being conquered,
(Rapture they will not forego) dare to resist and rebel;

Still, when resisting and raging, in soft undervoice say unto him,
Fear not, retire not, O man; hope evermore and believe.

Go from the east to the west, as the sun and the stars direct thee,
Go with the girdle of man, go and encompass the earth.
Not for the gain of the gold; for the getting, the hoarding, the having,
But for the joy of the deed; but for the Duty to do.
Go with the spiritual life, the higher volition and action,
With the great girdle of God, go and encompass the earth.

Go; say not in thy heart, And what then were it accomplished,
Were the wild impulse allayed, what were the use or the good!
Go, when the instinct is stilled, and when the deed is accomplished,
What thou hast done and shalt do, shall be declared to thee then.
Go with the sun and the stars, and yet evermore in thy spirit
Say to thyself: It is good: yet is there better than it.
This that I see is not all, and this that I do is but little;
Nevertheless it is good, though there is better than it.[1]

[1] Clough.

An Expectant Creation.

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An Expectant Creation.

For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.—Rom. viii. 19.

1. St. Paul realizes the coming of Christ as a power in the world. Christianity is not, with the Apostle, a saving truth, but a saving power, which Christ has brought into the world. Law and peace have come through Him, and the quickening of the mortal body through the indwelling Spirit. Sin is subdued, and men are made "children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (viii. 16, 17). But it is impossible for him not to contrast this ideal of freedom with the continuing sufferings of the present time. The creation is still waiting for a redemption, of which man shall be, in a measure, the instrument. The present suffering may well be borne, through the strength of the hope that is before us. Rising to a sublimer height of diction, the Apostle exclaims that "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God."

2. We are familiar with the thought of the expectation of Almighty God, of the patient long-suffering with which He waits, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." We also know well the exhortation to remember the expectation of the Blessed Ones, who, having finished their own course, gather as a great cloud of witnesses, to observe and long for our success. "Shall we not," cries an old preacher, "hasten and run that we may see our fatherland? There a great multitude of dear ones, fathers, brothers, sons, are expecting us, and, saved themselves, are anxious for our salvation." But we are not so familiar with the thought of the expectation of creation as a motive for which we should work out our salvation, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Mankind is wont to regard

itself as altogether apart from and above the other creatures of this world, which are apt to assume the humble office of an ornamental fringe to our lives, or of our lowly and necessary servants. Yet this mistaken view might well have been set right by a recollection of the teachings of the Bible, which show plainly that while man was made to be the head and crown of things earthly, yet, on one side of his being at least, he is brother to all of earth's children.

3. The text, then, might be described as St. Paul's statement of the doctrine of Evolution. Of course it would be quite absurd to claim for the Apostle any clear expression of the modern doctrine. No doubt the universe presents a very different picture to us from any which his mind could see, and it would be foolish to force his words into our modern ways of thought. Moreover, he is in this passage primarily thinking only of his little church at Rome, and giving them rules for their duty and loyalty, or what he calls "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." And yet, with the mind of a great philosopher—or, rather, with the vision of a great prophet—he is swept beyond the special case before him into the general principle which it involves, and in giving rules to Rome he is led to survey the method of the universe. The whole creation, he says, groans and travails in pain until now, as though it bore within itself the burden of the life that was to follow. It is to him what he calls an expectant creation—a prophetic anticipatory world. In the inanimate world there is, he thinks, a kind of dumb sympathy with the sin and struggle and redemption of man. Its history and process point on to the experience of man. Thus, in a large, poetic way, the universe looks to him like a connected and a growing whole, the life of man finding its prophecy and likeness in the life of things, and the life of the lower creation reaching up at last into the experience of man; and thus, it may be fairly said, there is at least a curious foreshadowing of ways of thought which have now grown familiar.

4. The expression of these truths is unique, but the truths themselves fall in with the entire scope of Scripture; and the renovation of the world forms as conspicuous a subject of the prophetic gospel as the renovation of society. It could not be

otherwise; for the sympathy of Nature with man is written on the first page of the Bible and on the last. In the spiritual history of Genesis the earth is said to have been cursed for man's sake. In the spiritual vision of the Apocalypse new heavens and a new earth are prepared for redeemed humanity. Meanwhile, the necessity of anxious toil, imposed upon us by the conditions of life in this season of our conflict, is designed by a Father's love for salutary discipline; and on the other hand, we are encouraged to believe that "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God"; waiteth, in due season, to reflect their glory even as they will reflect the glory of their Saviour at His Coming; waiteth, and yet not in mere idle and passive expectancy, but to receive a blessing towards which it has striven through a discipline of fruitful suffering. For "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

Who is the angel that cometh?
Pain!
Let us arise and go forth to greet him:
Not in vain
Is the summons come for us to meet him,
He will stay
And darken our sun:
He will stay
A desolate night, a weary day;
Since in that shadow our work is done,
And in that shadow our crowns are won,
Let us say still, whilst his bitter chalice
Slowly into our hearts is poured,
Blessed is he that cometh
In the name of the Lord.

The subject is Creation in Expectation—waiting earnestly for the revealing of the sons of God. Let us consider first the waiting of creation, and then the revealing of the sons of God.

I.

The Waiting of Creation.

St. Paul, with the eye at once of a poet and of a prophet, discerns in the present scene of created being tokens of a state of expectation. "The creation" is here a word of large import. It

includes even the irrational, perhaps even the inanimate, portions of God's handiwork on earth. The whole earth in its present state; the world of nature; the brute creation, as well as the human creation above and the material creation below it; all indicate a condition of imperfection, of suffering, of decay, all express, unconsciously where not consciously, a sense of want, of deterioration, of distress; all are, often and in many aspects, not what they would be, not what they were as they came fresh from the organizing hand of God; all denote, to one who looks on with the sympathy of humanity, much more with the reflection and discernment of one taught of God, a position very far removed from that which once they occupied, from that which they were designed to occupy, from that which they yet must occupy, under the sway of One as infinitely merciful as He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Eternal. St. Paul does not hesitate to say that this degenerate, this suffering, this sin-contaminated world, expresses by signs not to be mistaken a longing and a yearning for those times of restitution of all things, those times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord (Acts iii. 19, 21), which shall accompany the fulfilment of the mystery of God (Rev. x. 7). The creation, he says, is watching as with outstretched head for the future unveiling of the sons of God.

i. Nature and Man.

1. This whole creation of which St. Paul writes is to him not a dead but a living thing. Its movement is not the movement of machinery, but the movement of life. It groans and travails with its desire to fulfil itself. It is, he says, earnestly expectant; it waits for that which is to come. It is a sympathetic, a patient world. Instead of a blind, purposeless, mechanical process, this man sees a universe with an intention and a desire of its own, bringing forth at last, through the pains which we now call the struggle for existence, the state of things we see. Instead of a world-factory, grinding out with indifference its tides and storms, its plants and animals, and the emotions and ideals of men, he sees a universe working out with expectancy and desire a divinely appointed end. Thus he simply anticipates the whole series of philosophers and poets who have seen in Nature a living and purposeful process, manifesting at each step the presence of one

comprehensive will. It might have been St. Paul instead of Herbert Spencer who wrote of "the naturally-revealed end toward which the power manifested in evolution works." It might have been St. Paul instead of Tennyson who sang of

> One far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

2. By a strong figure, the Apostle represents all the universe, even to the dumb brutes, even to the lifeless fields and rocks and trees, as doing what in strict fact only sentient and intelligent man could do—grieving and sorrowing over the prevalence of misery and guilt, and longing for the day when these shall go for ever—awakened to a sense of the moral and physical evil to which it is subject, groaning under the bondage of its own corruption, and sustained only by the hope of a future emancipation into liberty worthy of the creature of God, and of a purification which shall bring it back to the goodness in which it was created at the first.

3. We have missed much in Christian thought by separating man as we have done from the great living creation around him. The poet went out to meet the sunrise with his eyes wide open, and he came back with a shining face and wonder streaming out of his eyes, and he sang, and would not be denied, of a speaking heart of creation that had responded to his own. The breezes had been whispering to him, the flowers had smiled upon him, the brooks had been chattering weary legends of the past, the great sun had been laughing the sorrow out of his soul, and he had caught a great eternal message, which showed that Nature and he were one. We easily tolerated the poet and listened to his pleasant voice, though we thought his words were wild, and even detected a gleam of insanity in his gaze. But now God is forcing us out of our useless isolation to realize that we are not isolated souls living in a nameless void, but a living and integral part of this splendid creation, that we live in it and it lives in us, that in some real sense it shares our travail and shall share our glory.

> Not from his fellows only man may learn
> Rights to compare and duties to discern!
> All creatures and all objects, in degree,
> Are friends and patrons of humanity.

There are to whom the garden, grove, and field,
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;
Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowliest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power can give.[1]

ii. Nature sharing the Suffering and the Glory.

1. Creation is represented as waiting in earnest expectation for the revelation of the sons of God, that is for their manifestation in glory, as the previous verses show, in which the Apostle speaks of their being glorified with Christ and of the glory that is to be revealed in them; in comparison with which, he says, present sufferings are of no account. The time of this revelation of the sons of God in glory is the advent of Christ, as explicitly stated in Col. iii. 4: "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory." The same is indicated also in 1 John iii. 2: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." Well, for this revelation of the sons of God in glory, Creation, *i.e.* all nature animate and inanimate, as distinguished from mankind, waits in expectation.

¶ Some of you may remember at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our College, how the students marched in a great torchlight procession, with many original transparencies and banners, and how the Freshman Class, then only a month old as students, carried at their head this motto: "The University has been waiting two hundred and fifty years for us." That was very amusing; but to any one who could read the deeper facts of the University the motto conveyed a profound and solemn truth. All this great, historic, institutional life had been indeed slowly evolved for the sake of these newly-arrived light-hearted boys, and now on their conduct were resting the destinies of the future, and out of their wise uses of their student life were to come our later blessings.[2]

2. No man will deny that there is a sense, a true and a weighty sense, in which all the lower creation is involved in the Fall of man. Who is there that does not know how much suffering

[1] Wordsworth. [2] F. G. Peabody (Harvard).

man's sin, man's cruelty, and man's thoughtlessness inflict day by day upon the poor dumb lower animals? For this is a case in which it is eminently true that "evil is wrought by want of thought, as well as want of heart." Who is there that does not know that the dumb creatures suffer because man fell; that the fact that man is cruel, impatient, thoughtless—in short, sinful and fallen—is the cause of incalculable anguish and suffering to these guiltless beings? The over-driven horse, urged beyond its speed and strength; the starved and tortured dog or cat, are witnesses to us, as we walk the streets of any city, that creatures which could not sin are yet involved in that suffering which is sin's sad result.

¶ A man got up in a meeting to speak. It was down in Rhode Island, out a bit from Providence. He was a farmer, an old man. He had become a Christian late in life, and this evening was telling about his start. He had been a rough, bad man. He said that when he became a Christian even the cat knew that some change had taken place. That caught my ear. It had a genuine ring. It seemed prophetic of the better day coming for all the lower animal creation. So I listened.[1]

¶ One would almost think that Nature is obliged, by man's sin, to do many things which she would not do if she could help it. Noble means and instruments are perverted to base and sinful ends. The atmosphere is constrained to carry from the speaker's lip to the listener's ear words which are false, which are impure, which are profane. Surely that beautiful, liquid ether was never made for that! Cannot you almost personify it, and think of it as rebelling against the base use to which sinful man turns it? Food is constrained to strengthen for sinful deeds. Is it not hard, so to speak, upon the innocent grain, upon the generous grape, that they should be compelled, whether they will or not, to yield their energy to the arm of the midnight murderer, as readily as to the hand that does the deed of mercy?[2]

I am the voice of the voiceless;
Through me the dumb shall speak;
Till the deaf world's ear be made to hear
The cry of the wordless weak.
From street, from cage, and from kennel,
From jungle and stall, the wail
Of my tortured kin proclaims the sin
Of the mighty against the frail.[3]

[1] S. D. Gordon. [2] A. K. H. Boyd. [3] E. Wheeler Wilcox.

3. Man can both sin and suffer. The inferior animals can suffer but not sin. And as for the landscape, as for the inanimate universe, it can neither sin nor suffer. How, then, you will say, can it be involved in man's Fall? And we reply, that it is a mistake to fancy that a thing is perverted from the end contemplated by the Creator only when it knows the fact and suffers from it. This world, this inanimate creation, is involved in man's Fall, according to its nature; it is fallen, in the way and the sense in which, by the make of things, it is possible that it should be fallen. Of course there is no guilt; it cannot sin. But there is perversion; degradation; turning of it aside from the wise, and kind, and beneficent purposes contemplated by the Creator; and in that sense Nature's fall is real and deep.

¶ Even that conduct in inferior animals which appears to us to contain something of a moral element, that which we call vice in an inferior animal, is always the result of some wrong conduct upon man's part. Anything that is properly wrong in the actions of a dumb creature, anything that looks wicked, or intentionally malignant, is imported into its conduct from some previous sin or error on the part of man.[1]

¶ His extraordinary sympathy with animals was one of the most singular and pleasing features in Thoreau's character. Like St. Francis, he felt a sense of love and brotherhood towards the lower races, and regarded them, not as brute beasts without sensibility or soul, but as possessing "the character and importance of another order of men." He protested against the conceited self-assurance with which man sets down the intelligence of animals as mere "instinct," while overlooking their real wisdom and fitness of behaviour. They were his "townsmen and fellow-creatures," whose individuality must be recognized as much as his own, and who must be treated with courtesy and gentleness. "There was in his face and expression," says Mr. Conway, "a kind of intellectual furtiveness; no wild thing could escape him more than it could be harmed by him. The grey huntsman's suit which he wore enhanced this expression. The cruellest weapons of attack, however, which this huntsman took with him were a spy-glass for birds, a microscope for the game that would hide in smallness, and an old book in which to press plants."[2]

[1] A. K. H. Boyd.
[2] H. S. Salt, *Henry David Thoreau*, 132.

iii. Nature in Expectation.

Thus, then, we have seen that it is truth the Apostle tells when he says that all Nature is in some sense fallen; involved in man's Fall. But another fact asserted in the text is that all Nature is waiting for better days. "The creature," that is, all creation, is in a condition of "earnest expectation." In the case of the first fact, that Nature is fallen, we can find a thousand proofs from our own experience that the Apostle's statement is just; and this second one, of Nature's expectancy, might be received upon the same testimony, though it is the authority of revelation which here comes in to clear the teaching of experience from the suspicion of transcendentalism or mysticism. And, indeed, all things are unconsciously looking forward. There is a vague, dumb sense that surely better things are coming. All conscious things live in an undefined hope. We can discern many indications that this is so. How ready human beings are to listen to the assurance that there is "a good time coming." And wherefore? Not, surely, that there is any great sign as yet of its approach, but simply from the belief that evil will one day die, and the reign of good begin!

1. The Greek word translated "earnest expectation" is a picture in itself. It is the expectation of a man with head erect, looking out afar towards the source from which the succour is to come. It presents to the eye the waiting of all creation for the manifestation or further work of the children of God; groaning meanwhile and travailing in pain. And so, as we read the great Apostle's words, as we seek to picture to our minds their meaning, there rises before us, as some vast, majestic vision, the imagery of a whole world, a whole universe—fields, trees, rivers, clouds, and stars — great nations, thronged cities, endless crowds of immortal beings, numberless hosts of creatures animate yet without rational souls—all waiting, watching, looking out; standing with the head thrust forward, and silently, eagerly, gazing far away for something hoped and longed for—something that is slow, indeed, in coming, but that is sure to come at last.

¶ I believe where the love of God is verily perfected, and the true spirit of government watchfully attended, a tenderness towards all creatures made subject to us will be experienced, and

a care felt in us that we do not lessen that sweetness of life in the animal creation, which the great Creator intends for them under our government.[1]

2. Why is creation waiting so earnestly for the revealing of the sons of God? Because creation is subjected to vanity, that is, to instability, decay, corruption, from which it is to be delivered at the revelation in glory of the sons of God. To this vanity creation became subject not of its own will, *i.e.* not of its own doing or of its own fault. It was the appointment of the Divine Will. When man fell, God so ordained it that man's sin should affect also the brute creation, and inflict a blight on even inanimate nature. It was thus that the intense evil of sin was broadly marked, and that man reaped bitter fruit of his own transgression in the deterioration of that which otherwise would have been unto him only and altogether a beauty and a joy. Subjected, however, as creation is to vanity, it is still a condition of hope, for it is to undergo a regeneration; it is to be set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. And it is represented as being so conscious of this bondage, and so longing for deliverance, that the Apostle speaks of nature as like a woman in the pangs of childbirth, "groaning and travailing in pain together until now."

(1) Creation longs to be delivered from *the bondage of its own corruption.* This deliverance depends upon the redemption of man; for, as the sins and degradation of the human race have cast their shadow of pain and desolation over the fair face of the earth, and the tares of evil in the heart of man have been imaged in the thorns and thistles of the field, so has there been also a wondrous sympathy in the upward path. Man's nature is redeemed from degradation through the mercy of God, and Nature around him shares in his elevation. "The merciful man is merciful to his beast," and societies for preventing cruelty to animals, and hospitals for the dumb creatures, attest the reality of this relationship. One of the first signs of improvement in a squalid house or street is the appearance in the windows of pots or boxes of plants which are evidently the objects of loving care. Even here and now we may catch glimpses of an age when the manifestation of the Divine Sonship in man shall not tolerate the

[1] J. Woolman, *Journal*, chap. xi.

devastation of the face of the earth by war, or the wasting of its beauty and usefulness by folly or ignorance. And for this more perfect era, this Eden of peace and wisdom, creation waits, "groaning and travailing in pain together until now."

(2) But the expectation of creation is also that it shall yet become *a good servant to the sons of God.* Man is the head and king over the lower creatures, and creation longs for her head to be worthy of his place in the world. The earth is a storehouse full of things of use and beauty, which are designed by the great Creator to supply the intelligent needs of man. But in order that creation may thus be a good and gracious servant to our race, it needs eyes to see, ears to hear, wisdom to act. For how many ages has creation lain in travail with her choicest treasures in her womb, waiting the manifestation of the God-given skill of man to enable her to deliver them to the world! Generations gazed with stupid, uncomprehending eyes upon steam rushing from boiling water, and this creature of God waited until at last a man was enlightened to understand and use this mighty power, and with it to change the face of the earth.

¶ Nature, ever since sin came into our world, has refused to give her strength. To man, fallen man, Nature has never gone forth in her fulness,—but then, when these "sons of God" walk this earth, she will put forth again, as at the first, her power, her loveliness, and her fragrance; and there will be such a bursting in "the new heavens and the new earth" as was never seen and never conceived before.[1]

I came to lay my sorrow in the wood,
  It had so heavy grown,
And on my way the little speedwells stood
  And claimed it for their own.

I came to let my tears in anguish fall,
  They were too great to bear,
And now the little speedwells hold them all
  I have no tears to spare.

There is no other sign, by flower or leaf,
  To mark the road I came,
This tiny cup of blue bears all the grief
  I had not strength to name.[2]

[1] J. Vaughan. [2] Dollie Radford.

(3) The highest reason why creation awaits "the manifestation of the sons of God" is that creation may *praise its Maker* perfectly, being itself made whole. The lower creatures, animate and inanimate, are faithful to their Maker, and dumbly praise and adore Him by their obedience to His laws; but man, the master of the garden, who should be the spokesman of all this inarticulate life, the precentor of the world's *Te Deum*, is too often faithless and a blasphemer. So just as a fair strong body is ruined by the loss of its reason, so creation feels that, faithful to God as all the rest may be, man's unfaithfulness is a piteous blot on her fair fame, man's dumbness or discord robs of its dominant and most essential part her orchestra of praise. And so creation waits—waits for the perfected redemption of man's nature, to restore the lost unity of her life; waits for man, as a son of God, to stand forth as her high priest, who shall interpret and offer up to Heaven her gratitude and love.

> Shall only the children of Adam behold
> Such glory unrolled?
> Shall only the gaze of the earthborn desire
> The miracle wrought with these wreathings of fire?
> Not so. In the calm of the white sunrise
> The Maker looks down with His holy eyes,
> And the seraphs that stand
> At His left and right hand
> Chant the song of the season of sacrifice:
> The psalm of the earth when, her harvesting done,
> She lifts up her arms to the path of the sun,
> And offers, with tithes of her vines and her sheaves,
> The life of her leaves—
> Their beauty of burning as praise
> To the Ancient of Days.[1]

3. Are there any signs that the redemption of man is to work out the redemption of creation? Two lines of conquest over the powers of darkness go on together, the one overcoming physical obstacles, and the other spiritual.

(1) The physical process moves at an increasing rate. It began far back in history, and depends on the mental energies of man. Even the Syrian desert is not mere sand and rock, but consists of excellent soil—desert only by reason of man's neglect.

[1] Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer, *Poems*, 67.

The barren sides of Lebanon have once had beautiful terraces in high cultivation. The terraces remain, but the culture has ceased with man's apathy or relapse towards barbarism. In all civilized countries the soil is useful exactly in the degree in which man's energy defends it from returning to wildness. Modern discoveries have in two ways lengthened life—by preserving health on one side, and by crowding into a given time far more achievement. All these conquests are gifts of God to man, and obtained through man. They are poured out profusely, and at the same time they are educating into higher skill the race that discovers them; and the race which produces more Newtons, and Watts, and Nasmyths, more Harveys and Pasteurs, will become the channel of a greater flood of beneficent inventions.

¶ Here, for instance, is the extraordinary power which we call electricity. It is a creation of God. It has had its mysterious origin and history through all the clash and movement and conflict of the universe of God. It has gone its way, flashing and dancing across the sky, and giving men vague lessons of the power of God. But it was meant for more than this. It was meant to be the minister of human ends, of social utility. And for this it waits, until at last the ingenuity of man takes hold of its higher capacity. The force was always there, expectantly waiting—eager to serve the wants of man; but God's purposes through it could be worked out only by the skill and insight of the sons of God. Finally, after ages of a patient creation, the inventor thinks God's thoughts after Him, the sons of God are revealed in their relation to Nature, and then the creation moves on into its higher uses, and lights us, moves us, warms us—the familiar instrument of our days and nights.

¶ Creation waits for man. The work of God is in the hands of the sons of God. Here is a vessel eager to reach her port, and God's winds sweep gently over the sea and invite her to move on. But not the fairest wind can bring her on her way unless man does his part. The earnest expectation of the vessel waits until the captain spreads her sails; and then, man working with God, the creation which lay dead and lonely on the sea becomes a thing of life and motion, and leaps on her way. So it is, the Apostle seems to say, with all the higher movements of God's creation. The method of God works through the participation of man. The whole creation pauses until the spirit of life takes command of the mechanism of life, like a captain giving orders on his ship. God may create the best of circumstances, but the

whole creation simply groans and labours, like a vessel labouring in a sea until man steadies her with his sails and spreads them to catch God's favouring breeze. The patient expectation of the vessel waits for the manifestation of the captain's will.[1]

¶ It was the laws of Evolution as we call them, meaning the laws of God, that gave man muscles and bones to lift and carry, but it was not till sons of God appeared who discovered that wind, and water, and steam, and electric energy were going man's way and might fetch and carry for him, that he was delivered from his rude and animal drudgery. Natural law made man to be racked with ague in a fen, but creation had to wait till some son of God discovered the antidote under the bark of a tree. It was with many a bitter groan that the slaves waited for Wilberforce, that the prisoners of England waited for Elizabeth Fry, or the women of our city slums for Catherine Booth. Our whole complex civilization indeed, half godless though it still be, is what it is, in its care for human life, and its varied social activities, because of the sons of God who have already been manifested, the men and women who have given their brains and their hands and their hearts to the service of God and their fellows. It is on their forgotten shoulders that we stand to-day. It is through them that God's plans have run.

'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio.[2]

(2) The other road of progress is the spiritual. On that road the pace is slower, the results more unequal, and there are intervals of heart-breaking failure and retrogression. The spiritual progress has never preserved in past centuries a steady and equal pace. No period of twenty years has ever equalled the grand outpouring of life of the first twenty years after the Resurrection. But the law has always been the same. Churches have prospered when peopled by faithful men; they have languished or died when faith has languished and sin has paralysed the will. "The river of grace," says Fénelon, "never runs dry, it is true; but it often changes its course to water new districts, and leaves in its old channel nothing but arid sands. Faith will never be extinct; but it is not tied to any of the places which it enlightens,

[1] F. G. Peabody. [2] Arch. Alexander.

it leaves behind it a frightful night to those who have despised the day, and it carries its rays to purer eyes."

'Tis weary watching wave by wave,
And yet the tide heaves onward;
We climb, like corals, grave by grave,
That pave a pathway sunward.
We're driven back, for our next fray
A newer strength to borrow;
And where the vanguard camps to-day,
The rear shall rest to-morrow.

Though hearts brood o'er the past, our eyes
With smiling features glisten;
For, lo! our day bursts up the skies!
Lean out your souls, and listen!
The world is following freedom's way,
And ripening with her sorrow.
Take heart! Who bears the cross to-day
Shall wear the crown to-morrow.[1]

II.

The Revealing of the Sons of God.

1. Who are the sons of God? The Apostle has just told us: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The sons of God, then, are simply the people led by God's Spirit—people lifted by God, that is to say, into the higher capacities of their own spiritual life; and for such people, he announces, the whole creation waits. Without them the universal evolution pauses in its course. So runs his extraordinary statement of the method of creation. When we translate it into our ways of speech, the point seems to be this: the movement of the universe goes on its way from the beginning to a certain point under mechanical laws, fit for material things. Causes and effects, attractions and repulsions, heat and light and the rest—these have their way in moulding the world. But at a certain point the elements of evolution become changed; they become human, spiritual, personal. The problem of the universe is no longer to mould and harden a world—it is to unfold and quicken the higher faculties of man; and for this new work of God a new

[1] Gerald Massey.

necessity appears — the help of man. Not God Himself can develop the possibilities of human institutions and human characters except through the instrument of human beings themselves. It is through them that God, in the higher ranges of His method, works. His ends are not reached by such laws as could create or maintain the world; they are reached through His sons.

¶ Of all luggage man is the hardest to move. He won't move unless he will.[1]

¶ Our natural Will is to have God, and the Good Will of God is to have us; and we may never cease from willing nor from longing till we have Him in fulness of joy; and then we may no more desire.[2]

2. And what does St. Paul mean by the revealing or manifestation of the sons of God? He explains this in the 23rd verse. It is their adoption, or rather the perfecting of their adoption, their being clearly proved the sons of God by the redemption of their whole nature. The inner Divine Life must grow within, and transfuse and shine through their earthly life by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost, as the flame shines through the slides of the lantern. "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; . . . and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Pet. i. 5 ff.). Christlike graces are to be cultivated, a Christlike character is by obedience and by Divine help to be formed, until the sonship to God is clearly manifested, the transfiguration of human nature from glory to glory completed. This, then, is the end for which creation waits, earnestly expecting man's growth in holiness, or, in other words, his being shown forth in fact as a true son of the Heavenly Father.

I saw thee once, and nought discern'd
For stranger to admire;
A serious aspect, but it burn'd
With no unearthly fire.

Again I saw, and I confess'd
Thy speech was rare and high;
And yet it vex'd my burden'd breast,
And scared, I knew not why.

[1] S. D. Gordon. [2] Julian, the Anchoress.

I saw once more, and awe-struck gazed
On face, and form, and air;
God's living glory round thee blazed—
A Saint—a Saint was there![1]

3. But it is at the advent of Christ that, in the Apostle's thought, the sons of God will be manifested. Then shall come to pass the full realization of their adoption, in their attainment to the full privileges of their sonship. Then, when Christ their life is manifested, shall they also with Him be manifested in glory. But this manifestation in glory is here contemplated in relation to a particular feature of it—freedom, the liberty of the glory of the children of God. The advent of Christ will be a glorious emancipation to the children of God. But from what?

(1) From that bondage to corruption, that subjection to vanity, under which they, in common with all creation, groan. Man is a dying creature. All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. Instability and decay cleave to him and to all that appertains to him. Vanity is written upon his person and his possessions, upon his plans and his projects, upon his pomp and his power. We all know this and feel it. From this, then, the children of God are to be set free. But not from this only. It is not simply in reference to mortality that they shall be manifested in glory.

(2) The liberty of the glory of the sons of God will not be merely freedom from dissolution and decay. It is not the liability to this under which they chiefly groan, but the infirmities of their nature, the moral corruption that attaches to them, the impotence for good, the tendency to evil, to which, by reason of the body, they are subject. The children of God are, indeed, regenerate, but the infection of the old nature still remains. They have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, but it is not dead; it still writhes and struggles. Though not dominant, sin still indwells. The reptile has received its death-blow, but it has still power to turn and sting. And thus from the lips of the saints proceed such plaintive confessions as these, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust"; "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"; "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . O wretched

[1] J. H. Newman.

man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

¶ At His first coming Christ became a partaker of flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy death, and bring life and immortality to light. To this, the gracious purpose of His first coming, He will give full effect when He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Then death shall be swallowed up in victory. Then, at His call, they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, and they that are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Then will He change their body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, and so corruption shall put on incorruption. Then, arrayed in a spiritual body, the children of God shall no longer be subject to pain, infirmity, decay, or bondage of any kind; they shall be as the angels of God, and, like them, able to serve God, day without night, for ever and ever.[1]

4. Thus in the time of St. Paul the creation stood in expectation with head erect, with far-off look, waiting for the dawn of that day which should make her deliverance through Christ complete. St. Paul knew not what would follow—that after eighteen centuries the expectant creation would still so stand, waiting for deliverance. Still the world is full of misery; still it waits for redemption; it is as far off from peace as ever. Strife and struggle, pain and death, are inscribed upon the world's foundation stones. They are older than the fall of man. Long before man lived to be tempted and to fall we find their history in the stone book of creation. The creation was made subject to vanity; that is, to constant change. But He who so made it knew the issue. He subjected the same in hope. Only in the way of hope can we yet understand the great story of the creation.

¶ We have waited nearly two thousand years, and the language used by those who have lost faith is that they can wait no longer; that the power of Christ is no more seen. "When the Hebrews," says one of these hopeless writers, "were on their way to the Promised Land they perceived that God was with them. God had spoken and said, 'It lies before you'; and by night a cloud of fire kindled and marched in their van. Now the celestial light is extinct. We are not quite sure that we have God over our heads. We possess no other light but our understanding, and with this glimmering guidance we must direct ourselves through the night.

[1] A. R. Symonds.

Oh that we could still be sure that there is a promised land; that others besides us would reach it; that this desert would end in something. This certainty is taken from us, and yet we advance continually, pushed forward by an indefatigable hope."[1] Beyond doubt, if the power of the Lord is gone, all is gone. He is not a doctrine, but a power. Surrounded by the sick and maimed, He heals them. When He speaks of the Divine law He does not fear to complete and enlarge it. What is the power that enables men to live no longer to themselves? "The love of Christ constraineth us," replies St. Paul; and the word "constraineth" denotes a real compelling.

Thou with strong prayer and very much entreating
Willest be asked, and thou shalt answer then,
Show the hid heart beneath creation beating,
Smile with kind eyes and be a man with men.

Were it not thus, O King of my salvation,
Many would curse to thee and I for one,
Fling thee thy bliss and snatch at thy damnation,
Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun,

Ring with a reckless shivering of laughter
Wroth at the woe which thou hast seen so long,
Question if any recompense hereafter
Waits to atone the intolerable wrong:

Is there not wrong too bitter for atoning?
What are these desperate and hideous years?
Hast thou not heard thy whole creation groaning,
Sighs of the bondsmen, and a woman's tears?

Yes, and to her, the beautiful and lowly,
Mary a maiden, separate from men,
Camest thou nigh and didst possess her wholly,
Close to thy saints, but thou wast closer then.

Once and for ever didst thou show thy chosen,
Once and for ever magnify thy choice;—
Scorched in love's fire or with his freezing frozen,
Lift up your hearts, ye humble, and rejoice!

Not to the rich he came or to the ruling
(Men full of meat, whom wholly he abhors),
Not to the fools grown insolent in fooling
Most, when the lost are dying at the doors;

[1] Guyau, *L'Irréligion de l'avenir*, 337.

Nay but to her who with a sweet thanksgiving
Took in tranquillity what God might bring,
Blessed him and waited, and within her living
Felt the arousal of a Holy Thing.

Ay for her infinite and endless honour
Found the Almighty in this flesh a tomb,
Pouring with power the Holy Ghost upon her,
Nothing disdainful of the Virgin's womb.[1]

5. The work of God moves on through the revealing of the sons of God. Now, suppose any soul fails of its higher capacities and remains stunted and unrevealed; is that merely a personal loss of happiness or of salvation? On the contrary, it is a loss so vast as to make every personal motive shrink into insignificance. It is simply retarding to that extent the perfect and universal work of God. There are purposes which God Himself cannot fulfil on earth except through us, and every sin of ours is a barrier set in God's way. When a man says that to himself, he has a motive worth having. To be sinning, not against one's self, but against the universe; in the petty yielding to our own indolence or neglect, to be a hinderer of God's great ends in the world—that is what gives awfulness to every thought of sin. To injure, blot, ruin one's self—that may be a small matter; but to hold back the vast mechanism of creation—that gives our little life significance. It is as some great factory where the looms go weaving with their leaping shuttles the millions of yards of cloth, and then of a sudden one thread breaks, and the loom stops short in its progress, lest the whole intricate work be marred.

¶ There is one aspect of life of which I feel sure we take too little notice, and which is constantly hindering and paralysing many a sincere desire to do right. It is the sense of insignificance. A man looks at his life, and it is a poor, feeble, insignificant thing. He says to himself: "Here am I, with my infinitely unimportant life, influencing nobody. Of what earthly importance is it that I should struggle thus against the stream of my tendency and taste? Why not let my turbulent passions sweep me down their stream and bury my insignificant life in their unhindered current?" That is the unconscious defence of many a ruined life. For one man who errs by thinking too much of himself, ten, I believe, fail

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *St. Paul.*

by not, in the true sense of the phrase, thinking enough of themselves. But now comes the Apostle into the midst of this sluggish, half-hearted, spurious modesty, and says to your soul: "Yes, taken by itself your life is certainly a very insignificant affair; but placed as you happen to be placed, in the kind of a universe which God has happened to make, your life becomes of infinite importance. For God has chosen to work out His designs, not in spite of you, but through you; and where you fail, He halts. Almighty God needs you. You are not your own, either to be insignificant or to be great, but you are in the service of that which is greater than yourself, and that service touches your life with its own greatness." It is as though you were a lighthouse-keeper set to do your duty on your bare rock. Can any life be more unpraised or insignificant? Why sit through weary nights to keep your flame alive? Why not sleep on, all unobserved, and let your little light go out? Because it is not your light—that is the point. You are not its owner; you are its keeper. That is your name. You are a light-keeper. You are set there with this as your trust. The great design of the Power you serve takes you thus out of your insignificance, and while you sit there in the shadow of your lonely tower, ship after ship is looking to you across the sea, and many a man thanks God that, while lights which burn for themselves go out, your light will be surely burning. The earnest expectation of many a storm-tossed sailor waits for the revealing of your friendly gleam. The safety of many a life that passes by you in the dark is trusted from night to night to you.[1]

¶ There are some who quite sincerely advertise their limitations as the majority advertise their skill, who cannot suppose themselves—and dread lest others should suppose them—capable of any achievement away from the commonplace line, and who almost placard themselves with an announcement that they are less than nothing and vanity. In fact, it sometimes appears as if people found in their low self-estimates an actual source of pride. "Extremes meet," said Emerson, "and there is no better example than the haughtiness of humility." And the mood of self-depreciation is, moreover, one into which men and women of sensitive consciences and clear vision of spiritual ideals are perhaps particularly likely to fall, and a mood which they are particularly likely to carry too far. Precisely because of its near kinship with the virtue of real humility do we require to be on our guard against it. If self-depreciation be a less prevalent disease with us than conceit and egotism, it is at least prevalent enough to

[1] F. G. Peabody.

call for remembrance and mention when we are drawing up any catalogue of moral ills to which our human nature may be heir. One of the lessons very needful to be learnt is this—that, as Mr. Spurgeon put it, "it is no humility for a man to think less of himself than he ought." [1]

[1] H. W. Clark, *Studies in Character*, 120.

The Saving Grace of Hope.

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The Saving Grace of Hope.

For by hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—Rom. viii. 24, 25.

As compared with the importance and urgency claimed for *faith* on the one hand, and for *love* on the other, in the New Testament, it might almost seem as if *hope* is scarcely regarded as a duty, or as one of the distinguishing marks of the Christian character. Indeed, it would be difficult to show from the Gospels alone that our Lord Himself attached any importance to hope as a frame of mind to be cultivated; or that He ever enjoined or required it of His disciples, as He so very obviously and even urgently demanded of them an almost unbounded faith. It would not be too much to affirm that, according to the record, we have no positive knowledge that the word "hope" ever proceeded from the Saviour's lips, or had any place among those many parables and Divine precepts which we associate directly with His earthly life. "O woman, great is thy faith"; "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"; "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace"—these are among the gracious and encouraging words which we are accustomed to consider as among the most vital and characteristic sayings of Jesus. We have to come to St. Paul to learn, for the first time, that "we are saved by hope."

And yet the whole life on earth of Jesus, the very temper and disposition of our Lord, as we read of Him in the Gospels; His absolute reliance upon and confidence in His Father; the habitual sunny outlook, as it were, the glad and gracious confidence of the Son of Man amid the despairing and the sinful, and even when, as we know, He Himself had not where to lay His head; the entire absence of all fretfulness and complaining, of all bitterness,

of all that in these modern days we call pessimism or cynicism, and in ordinary life down-heartedness or discouragement; the habitual cheerfulness, in short, of the Son of Man, even under what seem the most distressing conditions, till, at the last, He gives Himself up to God, fainting and tortured on the cross, with "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"—surely never before, and never since then, has such a lesson of hopefulness been read to the world; such a truly Divine example of a human being, as St. Paul says, "saved by hope." And it is the very same lesson in life and in death—often too, as in the supreme case of our Lord, acted but unspoken, a lifelong "song without words"—the lesson of *hope arising out of faith*, that has been taught us ever since, by every one of those apostles, prophets, and martyrs, who have followed in the steps of the Divine Lord and Master, who came not to enjoy but to suffer, not to be ministered unto but to minister, not to rule but to serve, and so to "give his life a ransom for many."

I.

Salvation in Hope.

If we were to seek to illustrate what seems to be the plain meaning of the text, we might take the case of a sailor, washed overboard and in imminent peril of drowning. He feels his strength ebbing, and is on the point of giving up, when the flash of a boat's lantern and a hail give him fresh hope, so that, hope lending him vigour, he battles on until he is picked up by his rescuers. Of such a one we may say that he was saved by hope. Had hope not inspired him with fresh strength he would have been lost. Or, again, we may, as an illustration of this meaning of the text, remember how, within limits, patients tend to die or to recover according as they are despondent or hopeful. Such things, then, illustrate what seems to be the plain meaning of the text; and what they suggest is in fact true.

But the meaning thus suggested for our text, though true in fact, is not its real meaning. A better though a less simple translation is, "We were saved in hope." The text does not tell us by what we were saved. It tells us of something involved in the salvation. Salvation has hope in the heart of it. It is

not exhausted in the initial experiences. It is fraught with happy consequences, the hope of which characterizes all those who have been saved. There is an experience, salvation, and something involved in it, hope.

¶ The older commentators for the most part took the dative here as the dative of the instrument, "by hope were we saved." Most moderns take it as the dative of the manner, "in hope were we saved," the main ground being that it is more in accordance with the teaching of St. Paul to say that we were saved *by faith*, or from another point of view—looking at salvation from the side of God—*by grace* (both terms are found in Eph. ii. 8) than *by hope*.[1]

i. Hopefulness.

Hopefulness is in a very real sense the keynote of all Christian aspiration; the one ever-present distinction of the Christian religion and life from all that ever went before it (with one notable exception), and from much that has obtruded itself as "philosophy," even in these latter days.

1. We know how in pre-Christian times that vast Oriental system of Buddhism (which still counts more adherents, probably, than any other), even with many admirable moralities set forth in the way of precept, was pervaded throughout by a kind of philosophic pessimism; a hopelessness, in fact, which Schopenhauer in these latter days has only adopted and rendered into more modern terms of expression. The world is, at the best, according to that great Oriental philosophy, an illusion; at the worst, and as tested by human experience, a passing show of misery, disappointment, and vexation. It had been better for all of us not to have been born. Best now, for all of us, simply to cease to be. The only beatitude is *Nirvana*.

2. The pagan idolatries, into the midst of which Christianity was launched at the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, had no such definite incarnation in a single historic figure, nor perhaps any such definite philosophical outcome, as in the case of the religion of the Buddha. But in a pregnant word of St. Paul, addressed to those who had been "Gentiles in the flesh," and

[1] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*.

who, under his teaching, had accepted Christ as their Lord, we find a most striking appeal to their own inward consciousness of the change that had been wrought in their spiritual state. "Wherefore remember," he says, "that ye were at that time (*i.e.* before their conversion) strangers from the covenants of the promise, *having no hope*, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 11, 12, R.V.).

3. But St. Paul could even have added to the force of such an argument had he been able to extend it to this present hour, through all the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem, the abominable persecutions of the Middle Ages, and the long endurance under injustice, confiscation, and proscription (even, alas! and mostly, by professing Christians) of which the Jewish communities scattered throughout the world have been, and are even now, the object. For the Jew, even in his worst national aberrations in the earlier days, and still more in the long years of exile and persecution, and more than ever in St. Paul's time under the dominion of Rome, had maintained, as his most prominent and unique national characteristic, an undying inextinguishable *hope* as to the future of his race and country; a hope founded on faith in the one unchanging Jehovah, who had of old chosen and set apart Israel out of all the nations, and never would desert the people of His choice. This, indeed, is the very point of the Apostle's appeal to the Gentile converts in the Epistle to the Ephesians; they were, he says, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," and therefore "having no hope, and without God in the world."

¶ Hope was the very life of Israel. "Our fathers trusted in thee." "The Lord will be the hope of his people," "the confidence of all the ends of the earth." And, if the old fire of hope burned low in the ages of Pharisaic formalism, it blazed out again more brightly than ever when Christ our Lord brought life and immortality to light. Christ in us is the hope of glory, the one living power that could overcome the disgust and loathing of that hard old pagan world where hope was lost. And if its brightness was dimmed again in the dark times of Christian Pharisaism, it was never quite extinguished. Beyond the *Dies irae* rose *Jerusalem the golden.*[1]

[1] **H. M. Gwatkin.**

ii. The Christian Hope.

1. The Christian hope is not identical with hopefulness. We shall not understand how we are "saved in hope" unless we have a clear idea of the hope of which St. Paul speaks in the text. In so far as it is an act of the mind merely, it does not differ from the hope with which we are all familiar in daily life. Everybody remembers Lord Byron's words to Hope:—

> Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life!
> The evening beam that smiles the clouds away,
> And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!

Without hope endeavour would languish. No room would be left for design, or for rational enterprise of any kind. Life would become mere lazy, unconcerned trifling. Everybody feels this, and admits the power which that act of the mind, called by us hope, exercises in and upon our lives. But, though the hope of the text, in so far as it is a mere act of the mind, does not differ from natural hope, in other respects it does differ from it very widely.

¶ As faith is the special counter-agent of materialism, so the counter-agent of pessimism is hope. Like faith, this has a natural basis, which is commonest and strongest in the young. But this natural hopefulness, which varies with temperament, can be confirmed into Christian hope only "by the power of the Holy Ghost." For the mere natural hopefulness of a sanguine disposition fades when the troubles of life thicken with advancing years, as "the clouds return after the rain." But "tribulation," says St. Paul, "worketh patience; and patience, probation; and probation, hope."[1]

2. The importance of the Christian hope may be experienced—

(1) *In our daily life.*—There is the conflict with sin, in which we often seem to gain no ground, the same temptations recurring year after year with wearisome identity, or disappearing, when resisted, only to reappear in a new form, while our efforts after virtue seem daily to be renewed only that in like manner they may be daily disappointed. And in this long struggle with discouragement, hope is the sole secret of our success, for it is the one thing that enables us to rise after every fall, to take new

[1] J. R. Illingworth, *Christian Character*, 73.

heart after every failure, resolute to die fighting, rather than accept defeat.

> Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
> The labour and the wounds are vain,
> The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
> And as things have been they remain.
>
> For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
> Seem here no painful inch to gain,
> Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
> Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

¶ But though Watts calls his tremendous reality Hope, we may call it many other things. Call it faith, call it vitality, call it the will to live, call it the religion of to-morrow morning, call it the immortality of man, call it self-love and vanity; it is the thing that explains why man survives all things and why there is no such thing as a pessimist. If there be anywhere a man who has really lost it, his face out of a whole crowd of men will strike us like a blow. He may hang himself or become Prime Minister; it matters nothing. The man is dead.[1]

(2) *In old age.*—The decrease of capacity, the increase of infirmity, the prospect of the end, oppress the ageing man with gloom, and tempt him cynically to sadden others with the shadow of his own distress. But if we contrast Matthew Arnold's melancholy picture of old age with the stirring trumpet-tones of Browning's "Rabbi ben Ezra," we see, in sharp contrast, how Christian hope has changed all this:

> Grow old along with me!
> The best is yet to be,
> The last of life, for which the first was made:
> Our times are in His hand
> Who saith, "A whole I planned,
> Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

(3) *In the last hours.*—This is the climax of our Christian hope: "The righteous hath hope in his death." "Death," said Aristotle, "is of all things the most terrible, for it is an end." And it is precisely because to the Christian it is not an end that his conduct is so different from that of the Greek—a contrast well drawn out by Browning in his "Old Pictures at Florence." For

[1] Chesterton, *Watts*, 103.

the Greek and all who think with him must seek their full development in this world; whereas, in the Christian view "man has for ever," he can afford to wait, and his whole life is conditioned by this fact. Hence his hope culminates in death, as being but the entrance to the life immortal; he dies looking forward and not backward, and therefore progressive to the very end; for hope is the mainspring of progress, and "the righteous hath hope in his death."

¶ Over the grave of the first Bishop of Manchester is inscribed the one Greek word which in our English Bible is translated "The trumpet shall sound"—a word which carries our minds forward to the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, and utters forth the note of expectancy in the place where all hopes might seem to have died. Contrast with this Christian inscription what has been found written over the grave of a priest of the religion of pagan Rome in its decay. "He gave to his devotees,"—such is the praise ascribed by the priest to the god he worshipped—"he gave to his devotees kisses and pleasures and fun."[1]

¶ I often examine, with peculiar interest, the hymn-book we use at Carr's Lane. It was compiled by Dr. Dale. Nowhere else can I find the broad perspective of his theology and his primary helpmeets in the devotional life as I find them there. And is it altogether unsuggestive that under the heading of "Heaven" is to be found one of the largest sections of the book? A greater space is given to "Heaven" than is given to "Christian Duty." Is it not significant of what a great man of affairs found needful for the enkindling and sustenance of a courageous hope? And among the hymns are many which have helped to nourish the sunny endeavours of a countless host.[2]

Into the dusk of the East,
  Grey with the coming of night,
This we may know at least—
  After the night comes light!
Over the mariners' graves,
  Grim in the depths below,
Buoyantly breasting the waves,
  Into the East we go.

On to a distant strand,
  Wonderful, far, unseen,
On to a stranger land,
  Skimming the seas between;

[1] P. J. Maclagan. [2] J. H. Jowett.

On through the days and nights,
Hope in each sailor's breast,
On till the harbour lights
Flash on the shores of rest!

3. Now it is obvious that when St. Paul says "We were saved in hope," he is not regarding hope as an unstable or uncertain thing, nor is he regarding it as a quality which we may either take or leave according to our several liking. Far from this, we shall see, if we read the passage aright, that St. Paul is regarding hope as permanent and certain, and as an essential characteristic of the salvation which has already been begun in us; or, to put it more exactly, that very salvation itself is enshrined in hope. But it is noticeable that certain errors with regard to hope are constantly made. Let us see how these errors arise and how St. Paul's teaching refutes them.

(1) Hope is commonly conceived of as if there were the idea of *uncertainty* implied in it—as if to say, I hope for a thing, were to say, I look for it doubtfully—I expect it in a measure, but I am not sure of it. But it is not so. The Apostle says: "For we are saved in hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Here he puts hope and present vision in contrast; it is not certainty and uncertainty that he is contrasting, but things seen and things not seen; and that there is no idea of uncertainty is plain from the 25th verse, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it," expressing the peaceful, calm security in which the thing is looked for. Not the slightest indication is there here of any uncertainty involved in the expression "hope." All that the Apostle conceived to be meant by it was the expectation of a future thing. Now, this being so, it is evident that a serious error is made, the moment we conceive of hope as involving in it uncertainty.

¶ Every human hope is necessarily uncertain, because of the uncertainty of every thing under the sun, the uncertainty of our own life, the uncertainty, in fact, of every thing around us. No wonder that people accustomed thus to see hope doubtfully applied should have associated uncertainty with these words, but observe that the uncertainty is in that on which the hope rests; and, therefore, if a man gets a sure ground on which to

judge, there is no need of uncertainty. Faith and hope, in religion, have a reference to the words of God, and these are sure and steadfast; there is, therefore, no reason why they should be uncertain things here. Introduce God as the teller, as the promiser, as the speaker, upon whose testimony our faith goes forth, upon whose promise our hope rests, and then all apology for uncertainty is removed.[1]

What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholden
Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope?
What but look sunward, and with faces golden
Speak to each other softly of a hope?

Can it be true, the grace he is declaring?
Oh let us trust him, for his words are fair!
Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?
God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.[2]

(2) Hope has a reference to a *future* thing, not a reference to a present or a past thing, and it is confounding the objects of faith and the objects of hope to make that which Christ has done for us an object of hope, or to say that we hope that Christ died for us, or that we have an interest in His blood. What, then, is the object of hope? Just that which God is yet to do. The Gospel reveals God as the Governor of the universe, and sets forth the plan of His government; it makes us acquainted with what He has done, with what He is doing, and with what He has yet to do. The object of Christian hope is what God has yet to do. There is a personality, a reference to one's own self, involved in it; but while this is the case, it is this great plan of God that is the direct object of hope, and the personality is just something arising out of what it tells us. We can find no words more definite than St. Paul's own words in the context of our text, as showing what is the great object of hope. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

(3) Hope is not to be regarded as *an unnecessary grace.* St. Paul says that there are three things which abide—three things,

[1] J. M'Leod Campbell. [2] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul.*

that is, which last under all the changes of fashion and of custom, and of the varying schemes of different generations—three things which remain as the abiding strands of the human character—and of those the first is faith and the second is hope. Now when we turn to consider hope we are brought face to face with this—that hope suffers from not being taken seriously, as faith is. Even those who feel most their lack of faith know that faith is essential; they know that "without faith it is impossible to please God," and that those who come to God "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But with hope it is all different. We look upon hope, do we not, as a kind of beautiful fairy queen; and where hope is so beautiful we are apt to think she can do no useful work. She is like a beautiful woman whom people think to be above doing strong and useful work; but those who know her best, those who have seen the most tragic sides of life, know that although she is bright and beautiful on the bridal morning as the young couple come forth, and think that they are going to tread a path of flowers, yet it is on the tragic side of life that hope is at her best.

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, look'd thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?"—
"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ, *the living Bread.*"

O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,

To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

Thus Matthew Arnold. But what did he mean? He meant that Hope, the beautiful queen we think her, too beautiful to soil her hands or mar her face with work, goes up and down the

slums of East London with the worker as he toils on through all his difficulties, and that from the worst disappointment he is saved in Hope.

¶ A young man is working in his study. All the glamour of scientific discovery is sweeping over him, and his one great thought is to follow and back up his great master, Darwin. He is studying science, and he makes some of the most original experiments that have ever been made. But the exclusive use of the analytical reason, as in the case of his master, Darwin, clouds his faith. The boyish essay on Prayer is withdrawn from publication, and for years there rests upon his mind a cloud of awful doubt. But he had in his study, at his work, as his constant companion, something that never left him, something that always told him that truth could be learned, that some day his boyish faith would come back to him, something that kept him perfectly honest, perfectly sincere, perfectly true to himself through it all, and that thing was Hope. And when only a week before he died he walked up the Latin Chapel at Oxford, and as a firm believer received the Holy Communion in full possession of his magnificent faculties, it was Hope that walked in front of him, very reverently, having done her work. George Romanes was saved in Hope. It is a calumny, then, on Hope to look on her as a merely beautiful fairy queen. Hope is a nurse, Hope is a worker, Hope is a most delightful and sustaining intellectual friend.[1]

iii. The Power of Hope.

St. Paul places hope as the second of the Christian graces. It is a tremendous thing to be placed between faith and love. What is the magic power of hope which places her in such a position in the Christian life?

1. The first thing which we notice about hope—and it wants watching to find out the peculiar magic of its power—is that it purifies the human character. "Every man that hath this hope in him," says St. John, "purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure." It would be weary dismal work indeed to mark, year after year, our little growth, our frequent failure; to find the same temptations still assaulting us, the same meanness or vanity or envy lurking in our hearts. At times, it may be, we have been half inclined to put up with a lower standard, and to come to terms with our sins; to acquiesce in their occupying some portion of

[1] Bishop Winnington Ingram.

God's territory. But of His mercy, we are saved by hope. We renew the experience of the Psalmist, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." To see His goodness; yes, and to be like Him. For we shall see Him as He is. There is the hope which from the triumph of the risen Saviour breaks out upon our souls even in the darkest moments of their self-reproach; we are not fighting only to make the best we can out of fifty or sixty years. We could hardly bear to think what we have wasted and misspent if that were all; we could hardly hold on with the knowledge of the failures that we are. What changes everything for us is that through the often baffled hopes, through the fearful resolutions of our faltering hearts, there comes the thrill of that surpassing, saving hope that by His grace we shall one day be brought where sorrow and sighing flee away; where there shall be no more curse, and no more failure; where the storm of temptation shall be utterly forgotten in the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

Lord, many times I am aweary quite
Of mine own self, my sin, my vanity—
Yet be not Thou, or I am lost outright,
Weary of me.

2. But not only has hope this purifying power, not only will it make us believe that we are meant to live with angels and not herd with animals, not only will it lift a man into a different state of mind altogether, and purify his character, but hope is also the strongest influence that we can exert over other people.

¶ If you have read a little story for children called *Little Lord Fauntleroy* you have read a magnificent account of the influence of hope on others. You remember how the little lad goes to stay with his grandfather, and that grandfather is one of the most selfish, one of the meanest and most unkind of old men that have ever lived. But the boy believes in him. The boy, only about fourteen, keeps saying to his grandfather, "Oh, grandfather, how they must love you; you are so generous, you are so kind, you are so considerate to every one you meet." And the lesson of that beautiful story is the influence of hope on character. The old gentleman cannot withstand the belief of his boy; and he grows to be the unselfish generous man that the boy thought him.

3. Hope is the greatest inspirer of corporate work. And here we have to beware of a travesty of hope. Those who serve on boards and committees know that we do not believe very much in the merely sanguine man—the man who has always got a scheme which he thinks perfectly infallible, which he carries through in spite of all advice, and who, by his glib tongue and power of talk, sometimes drags the committee or board into miserable disaster. Now in our proper fear of the merely sanguine man do not let us despise the hopeful man. So far from hope being a hindrance upon boards or committees, social settlements, or any other corporate work, hope is the inspirer that keeps them going. You have sometimes seen the summer breeze sway down the cornstalks in a great field; they all bow beneath its magic power; that is how souls are bowed down by the influence of hope. One hopeful man will save a garrison; one hopeful woman will inspire a parish.

¶ The men of hope carry forward their fellows, as Matthew Arnold has well described, in words that gain impressiveness from their contrast to his own prevailing sadness—

> Beacons of hope, ye appear!
> Languor is not in your heart,
> Weakness is not in your word,
> Weariness not on your brow.
> Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
> Panic, despair, flee away.
> Ye move through the ranks, recall
> The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
> Praise, re-inspire the brave.
> Order, courage, return;
> Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
> Follow your steps as ye go.
> Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
> Strengthen the wavering line,
> Stablish, continue our march,
> On, to the bound of the waste,
> On, to the City of God.

iv. The Sphere of Hope.

1. "Hope that is seen is not hope." The whole point of St. Paul's argument in these two verses is that the attitude of

hope, so distinctive of the Christian, implies that there is more in store for him than anything that is his already. And not only is this principle true with regard to the future life and things unseen, but it is supremely true with regard to a building up of character. For to whatever height of excellence men may attain, they will always see above them a vantage-ground which invites fresh effort.

¶ The sphere of hope is "things not seen." "Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Therefore a Christian's real possession is not what he sees. Suppose God prospers him in this world and he has riches; let him be grateful, but let him confess that those are not his treasures. One hour with the Lord Jesus Christ will bring more satisfaction to the believer than the largest measure of wealth. Although he may have prospered in this world, the saint will ridicule the idea of making the world his portion. A thousand worlds with all the joy which they could yield are as nothing compared with our appointed inheritance. Our hope does not deal with trifles; she leaves the mice of the barn to the owls, and soars on eagle wings where nobler joys await her.

2. Now the greater part of our salvation belongs to the "things not seen." "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." Our salvation is partly of the past, but more of the future. For with God there are no unfinished beginnings, no inadequate completions. He is not like the foolish builder, who, without counting the cost, lays foundations wide and deep, and cannot complete the stately tower for which the foundations were planned. When God has appointed Jesus Christ as the chief corner-stone, what will the superstructure be? We may meanwhile obscure the magnificence of His plan by the foolishness of our building. But though it be by the destruction of our work, His spiritual house shall be completed, of which apostles and prophets are the foundation, and victorious martyrs the pillars, and every stone a blameless saint. All this was before St. Paul's mind when he wrote "in hope were we saved."

¶ In ancient times when God delivered His people from the bondage of Egypt, what pledge did He give them? "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I WILL BE hath sent me unto

you." "I WILL BE," that is the name by which God would be known. "I will be" what? It was for hope to fill it up. The promise was magnificent by its very vagueness. The children of Israel could fill it up in part by what they knew of God. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The promise of the name means that, and goes beyond it. The name is not "I AM," a revelation of the self-sufficiency of God. It is "I WILL BE," a promise of God's inexhaustible sufficiency through the future for all His people's need. And so it is now. This God of the "will be" of the future, is the God of our salvation.[1]

Something I may not win attracts me ever—
Something elusive, yet supremely fair;
Thrills me with gladness, yet contents me never,
Fills me with sadness, yet forbids despair.

It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow,
It shines beyond the farthest stars I see;
It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow,
And from the land of dreams it beckons me.

It calls, and all my best, with joyful feeling,
Essays to reach it as I make reply;
I feel its sweetness o'er my spirit stealing,
Yet know ere I attain it I must die.

II.

Waiting with Patience.

1. *What are we waiting for?*—The first thing the Apostle mentions with respect to the goal of our Christian hope is that all things and all life shall be set in their proper places once for all. "Waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." The sons of God are hidden now, and the throne of glory has not been unveiled. Things are not in their right places. The light has been put under a bushel; the sun has been obscured. The true order of things has not been set in the light of heaven.

The whole passage preceding the text deals with the goal of our hope. There is one point, however, on which it is of utmost

[1] P. J. Maclagan.

importance that we should be clear and allow no misconception to arise. St. Paul says we are "waiting for our adoption—the redemption of our body." Now by this word "adoption" he does not mean our acceptance as the sons of God; nor does the "redemption" mean atonement through the precious blood of Christ; for both these are complete already. But they both mean the final deliverance of the children of God at the second coming of our blessed Saviour, when all God's people shall be set free from every impediment, and, as adopted children, or as a chosen bride, shall be presented spotless, in perfect freedom before the throne of the Lord.

¶ The traveller in an unknown land, who wishes to explore it, to know how it lies, what it contains, how far its forests and its plains extend, looks out for some mountain from the elevation of which he can best survey it. He climbs to one height, and it takes him clear of the wood, showing how the forest in the distance is bounded by a low range of hills. If he climbs to a higher point, he hopes to see what lies beyond that range. Patiently he toils up the slope, until he gains the desired outlook and beyond the low hills he sees a vast and verdant plain, through which a river flows shining in the sun. But still on the utmost verge his view is restricted by sloping downs, which seem to indicate the presence of the sea beyond. If he can climb to the summit, he hopes to see what now he surmises. In patience, then, he toils upward once more, hour after hour, until, standing on the mountain top, he sees all round the mighty expanse. The forest lies beneath, a dark olive patch; the low hills seem hardly distinguishable from the surrounding plain; the great river is a thin silver streak; and beyond lie stretches of moorland, valley, and grassy downs; and farther still, lies the open sea, like a polished shield, extending far away, until lost on the horizon. At each point, his hope of what he wished to see became reality; it was no longer hope; for what a man sees is not hope, but knowledge. But hope of wider knowledge spurred him on, and, in patience, he plodded upwards, waiting until the object of his new hope was reached. Then all that he had thought and surmised, all that he had toiled for, was accomplished.[1]

2. *What is the value for the present life of this hopeful waiting?*—"If we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." There are three tests of the value of a truth for this

[1] J. E. Manning.

life. One is the bearing of its burdens; another is victory over our sins; the third is service for the Kingdom of God. Apply these three tests, and bring the Christian hope to bear upon them. Who can bear his burdens, the burdens of this lower life, its weariness, its monotony, its pain, its sorrows—who can bear them like the man who believes in the coming liberty of the glory of the children of God? "I reckon," said the Apostle, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." That faith makes every burden light. If we have that hope, we will bear our cross with a glad heart, and we will sing while bearing it: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed." And the weight of sorrow shall pass away for ever. And who will fight for purity in his own life and spirit like the man who believes that purity is ordained to determine the destiny of every created thing, like the man who believes that purity means ultimately unfathomable glory? That hope of glory will condemn the impure heart, will burn like a blazing fire in the bones of the man who does not keep his garments white. And the man with this hope will work with the most glowing enthusiasm. Who can work with such greatness of purpose, and might of heart, and strength of arm, as the man who believes in this glorious unfolding, who believes that man is destined for this wonderful central position in God's new creation, and that this earth of ours, these men and women we see around us, may be sons of God, the dazzling centre of a new creation in a world of everlasting glory? And so this hope fills us with inspiration. For the way is bright before us, and vast shall be the unfoldings of the future.

¶ There is a fine story told of Carlyle,—one welcomes anything about that great genius which tends to show him sympathetic with the Christian attitude, inclined towards the Christian faith. He was walking with the late Bishop Wilberforce in the grounds of a country mansion, and speaking of the death of Sterling, the associate and friend of both. "Bishop," Carlyle said suddenly, "have you a creed?" "Yes," was the answer of the other—fine in its own way too—"and what is more, the older I grow, the firmer that creed becomes under my feet. There is only one thing that staggers me." "What is that?" asked Carlyle. "The slow progress that creed seems to make in the world." Carlyle remained silent for a second or two, and then said slowly and

seriously, "Ah! but if you have a creed, you can afford to wait!"[1]

As the bird trims her to the gale,
I trim myself to the storm of time,
I man the rudder, reef the sail,
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime:
"Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed."[2]

[1] W. A. Gray. [2] Emerson.

How to Pray as we Ought.

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How to Pray as we Ought.

In like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.—Rom. viii. 26.

The subject contains two parts—our own prayer, and the work of the Holy Spirit in us. St. Paul speaks of two ways in which the Holy Spirit works in us—by helping our infirmity, and by making intercession for us. Obviously the work of the Holy Spirit comes first; we cannot even begin to pray without His Divine inspiration. St. Paul starts from this point—"The Spirit helpeth our infirmity."

We shall, therefore, take two main divisions—

I. The Intercession of the Spirit.

II. Our Prayer.

I.

The Intercession of the Spirit.

1. Let us consider first of all what is the practical value to us of faith in the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit," says the Apostle, "helpeth our infirmity." It is when we faint before the mystery and the terror of the universal life, and of human life, that we grow most profoundly conscious of this "infirmity," and feel most keenly that we are not wise enough, or strong enough, for the task imposed upon us by our own conscience and by the law of God; that in and of ourselves we cannot cease to do evil and learn to do well; that we cannot rise from imperfection to perfection. And it is just then, says St. Paul, just when we most need help and feel our need of it, that the Spirit of God "helpeth our infirmity," that His wisdom is made perfect in our folly, His strength in our weakness.

¶ The Spirit "makes intercession," literally *goes out to meet* the helpless creature for the purposes of intercourse and consultation, then intervenes by taking up his cause and pleading on his behalf—it is the work of a true Paraclete. The Son of God is such an Advocate on high. We can hear Him pray for both inner and outer circles of His disciples in John xvii., and now that He has entered upon the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, we can imagine, and trust to, His yet more efficacious High-priestly work on our behalf yonder. But He is far away, and the wings of faith and imagination are weak and often fail us. What is needed is a Helper within, one who not so much prays for us, as prays in us. If men had invented such a phrase for themselves it would have been laughed at as an impossibility, or rejected as blasphemy; surely a man must do his own praying to the God who is over him. But a characteristic feature of Christianity is the oneness of the God over us with the God in us, and the Spirit Himself undertakes our cause with yearnings that can find no words.[1]

¶ If "the Spirit helpeth our infirmity," we have no excuse for those infirmities for which we so readily apologize as being natural to man. They may be so, they may be part of our own fallen and evil nature, but it is the special work of the Spirit to deliver us from them, and to make us strong just where we were weak. A Christian who bears on him some chronic infirmity, whether of temper or of appetite, or of will, just as some men bear on their bodies marks of chronic ill-health, is one who has never realized what the Spirit of God might have done for him, and would have done, had he not hindered Him by his unbelief.[2]

(1) He who is able to make the confession "I believe in the Holy Ghost" has found a Divine Friend. For him the Spirit is not an influence, an energy, of One far off, but a present Comforter whom Christ has sent to fulfil His work, a present Guide ready to lead him into all the truth, a present Advocate waiting to gain acceptance for the deep sighings of the heart before the throne of God. So it is that Scripture speaks of His relation to us: so it is that we can understand how His Presence among men is dependent on the exaltation of Christ in His human nature to the right hand of the Father.

¶ The subject on which my mind has been dwelling of late is God's sympathy with man in his weakness and sin. I preached the other Sunday on the text, "The Spirit also helpeth our

[1] W. T. Davison. [2] G. S. Barrett.

infirmity," and the subject has been on my mind ever since. The idea of the Great Spirit being always and everywhere present as the sympathizing friend and helper of man has laid hold of my mind with new power. I used to think of the missionary going, and taking the Spirit with him where he went. Now I think of the Spirit as being already there, and inviting the missionary to come and join Him in the work. The Spirit was in China before I was born, and He brought me in to be a co-worker with Himself. And so everywhere and always. What would have become of the world but for the presence of the Divine Spirit in it? People seem to think that the heathen world has been without God all these centuries. The heathen, it is true, have not known God, but God has known them all the time. The measure of men's knowledge of God is not the measure of what God is to men. If God had not been in China, China would have been a hell. What keeps a man from becoming a demon? Is it not the presence of the Spirit in his soul? I have had more tenderness of soul in dealing with men ever since this truth has been brought home to me by God's Spirit. How thankful ought we to be that hard theological views and dogmas are giving way, and that the Spirit of Christ is coming in and quietly taking their place.[1]

(2) Again, he who is able to make this confession recognizes the action of One who is moulding his single life. Each believer is himself a temple to be prepared for the Master's dwelling. The same Spirit who shapes the course of the whole world hallows the soul which is offered to Him for a Divine use. The Christian believer is in one sense alone with God, and God alone with him. He has a work to do, definite, individual, eternal, through the ordinary duties and occupations and trials of common business; and this the Spirit sent in Christ's name, bringing to him the virtue of Christ's humanity, will help him to perfect.

¶ The Holy Spirit is the immediate source of all holiness. The missionary must, above all things, be a holy man. The ideal teacher of the Chinese is a holy man. "He is entirely sincere, and perfect in love. He is magnanimous, generous, benign, and full of forbearance. He is pure in heart, free from selfishness, and never swerves from the path of duty in his conduct. He is deep and active like a fountain, sending forth his virtues in due season. He is seen, and men revere him; he speaks, and men believe him; he acts, and men are gladdened by him. He possesses all

[1] Griffith John, *Life*, 457.

heavenly virtues. He is one with Heaven." This is a lofty ideal; but the Chinese do not look upon it as existing in fancy or imagination only. They believe that it has been realized in some instances at least; and I am convinced that no Christian teacher can be a great spiritual power in China in whom this ideal is not embodied and manifested in an eminent degree.[1]

(3) Life is indeed full of mysteries of which we can give no interpretation, of griefs for which we can gain no present remedy. Nay, rather, we must feel them deeply if we are to know God; and then the faith in the personal help of the Holy Spirit—the complement of the Incarnation—is sufficient for our needs. The prayer of the warrior of old time bewildered by the darkness was: "Give light and let me die." We can say: "Help us to live and the light will come," come through life itself.

¶ The Holy Spirit is the source of all spiritual illumination. Knowledge, even religious knowledge, without spiritual illumination is of the letter, and its possession brings no spiritual power. The things of God as facts and doctrines are fully revealed in this blessed Book. Still the Bible is not enough for us. The vital question is, how are we to *know* "the things that are freely given us of God"? How are we to reach the sunlit summits of full assurance about them?[2]

2. But now, more particularly, let us see what the intercession of the Spirit does for us. "The Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." We should observe three ways in which the Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

(1) *The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in union with our own spirit.*—The verb translated "maketh intercession" is one of those beautiful words, or compounds, in which the Greek language is so rich. Literally, it means "to meet with some one in a place agreed upon" who is "for" us, *i.e.* who is on our side, in whose grace and favour we stand. The words have sometimes been explained as if Paul meant to say that the Holy Spirit is literally praying in heaven for men, and hence the idea has arisen that the Eternal Father waits the personal intercession of the Spirit before His gifts are given. That idea is opposed to the very words of the Apostle, for he has spoken of the men in whom are the first-fruits of the Spirit as "groaning within themselves," as waiting in hope for the redemption of the body; and this groaning within ourselves

[1] Griffith John, *Life*, 324. [2] *Ibid.* 323.

corresponds to the "groanings which cannot be uttered." He then passes on to say, "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," and all this points to the interpretation that the Holy Spirit, in the soul, pleads as the author of prayer. His idea seems, therefore, to be this—There is a spirit within you, possessing you, which gives rise to longings earnest and unutterable—that is the Holy Ghost within, interceding with God. The whole passage in which the text is found illustrates in even a startling manner the truth and reality of the "coming" of the Holy Ghost, the extent to which He has separated Himself—as Christ did at His Incarnation—from His eternal glory and blessedness, and entered into the life of man.

¶ Have we understood that in the Holy Trinity all the Three Persons have a distinct place in prayer, and that the faith in the Holy Spirit of intercession as praying in us is as indispensable as the faith in the Father and the Son? How clearly we have this in the words, "Through Him (Christ) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Just as prayer must be to the Father, and through the Son, it must be by the Spirit. And the Spirit can pray in no other way in us than as He lives in us. It is only as we give ourselves to the Spirit living and praying in us, that the glory of the prayer-hearing Father, and the ever-blessed and most effectual mediation of the Son, can be known by us in their power.[1]

(2) *The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in union with Christ's intercession.*—The "intercession of the Spirit" on our behalf (carried on, it is implied, "in the hearts" of the saints, which only God searches) is mentioned nowhere in the New Testament but here. But it is not to be separated from the intercession of Christ which is mentioned just below. Christ's intercession is "at the right hand of God," but also He has by the Spirit taken us up into His own life. He dwells in us by His Spirit. By His Spirit we are knit into one and made His body. Doubtless, then, dwelling thus by the Spirit in the body, Christ intercedes for us. This is the intercession of the Spirit, which is also the intercession of Christ—an intercession gathering up into one, and sustaining and connecting and perfecting, all the imperfect prayers of all the saints.

[1] Andrew Murray.

¶ Kuyper distinguishes between the intercession of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Christ in this way:—

(*a*) Christ intercedes for us in heaven, and the Holy Spirit on earth. Christ, our Holy Head, being absent from us, intercedes outside of us; the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, intercedes in our own heart, which He has chosen as His temple.

(*b*) There is a difference, not only of place, but also in the nature of this twofold intercession. The glorified Christ intercedes in heaven for His elect and redeemed, to obtain for them the fruit of His sacrifice: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). But the object of the Holy Spirit's petitions is the laying bare of all the deep and hidden needs of the saints before the eye of the Triune God.

(*c*) In Christ there is a union of God and man, since, being in the form of God, He took upon Himself the human nature. Hence His prayer is that of the Son of God, but in union with the nature of man. He prays as the Head of the new race, as King of His people, as the one that seals the covenant of the New Testament in His blood. In like manner, there is to some extent a union between God and man, when the Holy Spirit prays for the saints. For, by His indwelling in the hearts of the saints, He has established a lasting and most intimate union, and, by virtue of that union, putting Himself in their place, He prays for them and in their stead.[1]

(3) *The Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*—The "groanings" of believers find expression, adequate or inadequate, in their prayers, and in such utterances as this very passage of Romans; but there is a testimony to the glory awaiting them more profound and passionate than even this. It is the intercession of the Spirit with "groanings" (or sighs) that baffle words. St. Paul has represented the "whole creation" as sending up to God a cry of weariness and suffering and hope; the heavens and the earth and all living things were created for a perfection which, as yet, they have not reached, but towards which they have been moving through unmeasured ages —"the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The cry of weariness and suffering and hope also rises from the whole Church of the redeemed on earth; we too are longing for a perfection as yet unattained: "We ourselves *groan* within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the

[1] A. Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 637.

redemption of our body." And then the Apostle attributes the same cry of weariness, of suffering, of hope, to the Spirit of God Himself; He is longing to raise all that are in Christ to an unachieved power and blessedness; the sins of the Church, its infirmities, its errors, its sorrows, are a heavy burden to Him. He is "resisted" and He is "grieved"; His intercession for us—so intimately does He share all the evils of our condition—is a kind of agony; He "maketh intercession for us with *groanings* which cannot be uttered."

¶ The Holy Spirit helps us, not by revealing to us precisely what we should ask for in each particular emergency, but by securing that our groanings, even though they cannot be articulately expressed, shall serve the purpose of prayer. The Spirit makes intercession for us with these very groanings that cannot be uttered; that is, He not only prompts them, but presents them to God in such a way that they are heard and answered. He who is the hearer of prayer searches the hearts, and does not need that their desires should be expressed in words, in order that He may know what they are.[1]

¶ All deep emotions are too large for language—they outsoar the narrow range of human speech. Both great joys and great sorrows break forth in tears. Profound longings express themselves in inaudible yearnings. The grandeur of God in nature—the sunset skies, with their pageantry of clouds, the ocean raging in storm, the mountains "crowned with snow and fire"—can awaken thoughts "too deep for tears." So in a profounder sense, when the soul is touched by the Spirit of God, emotions are awakened which, transcending all expression, break out in deep unutterable aspiration. He knows little of the power of prayer to whom such moments are unknown. Thus, by the inspiration of the Spirit, our wants are felt to be too deep for language, while the fulness of God's love transcends them all, and, rapt in faith and love, the soul kindles with irrepressible emotion.[2]

> The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
> If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
> My unassisted heart is barren clay,
> That of its native self can nothing feed:
> Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,
> That quickens only where Thou say'st it may:
> Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way
> No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.

[1] J. S. Candlish. [2] E. L. Hull.

Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.[1]

II.

Our Prayer.

1. *Prayer.*—Prayer must be regarded as twofold. It is a natural instinct, and it is an acquired art. It should be remembered, moreover, that the one depends closely upon the other; for, whereas the former precedes the latter, it is only in proportion as the practice of prayer is persevered in and cultivated that the ability of living in the atmosphere of prayer becomes possible.

This is what the Apostle means when he admonishes us to pray without ceasing, and in such prayers all words and brisk emotions of the heart are for the time in suspense. Such prayers issue calmly forth, being in this respect like the solar light, whose approach we cannot hear, but which is yet accompanied by a warmth that testifies to its presence. Yes, there is a deep, hidden colloquy of holy souls with God, which never ceases any more than does the beating of the pulse in a living man. It consists in an inward tending and aspiring of the soul towards its Source, and, although calm and silent, it influences and governs all the thoughts and volitions of him in whom it takes place. There are instances of the earth sending up from its lowest depth a tepid breath, which is scarcely perceptible to our senses, but which permeates the waters upon its surface, and impregnates them with medicinal virtues. And it is even so with the prayer peculiar to the man of piety; it hinders him in none of his avocations; rather, where it obtains, do these all thrive and prosper.

Day hath her hours told out, her toil for all,
Her time of sunrise and of noon to keep;
Her hour of setting, and of dusky calm,
Her nightfall fragrant with the breath of sleep.

[1] Wordsworth.

The lark he keepeth his appointed time,
The linnet boasteth of her little span;
Fluff owlets render up their shrill account,
And man hath seasons for his toil with man.

What is for God? Are all His times bespoke?
Remaineth none undedicate to earth?
Are all impregnate with the dews of toil,
Hath Time forgotten in his age his birth?

Abideth yet an hour, most still and grey,
Whose confines all are indeterminate;
Nor to the sun nor stars pertaineth she,
But on the borders is content to wait.

One wing she poiseth on the lap of sleep,
One wing she reacheth to the bridegroom day;
Work is of God, but prayer forerunneth work—
Even so, Father—let us pray!

Silence in Heaven for a space; Amen!
The night shall certify, and the day tell—
But one hour halloweth, with a voiceless speech:
Even so, Father: it is well![1]

¶ If thou wouldst acquire this peculiar kind of prayer which transcends both place and time, thou must begin with the humility of a child to pray at the particular place appointed by God for the purpose, which place is the sanctuary or the silent closet. Prayer is an art, and every art requires to be learned with pains. Do not therefore shrink from what may seem to thee the trouble of attending at the time and place which God has been pleased to assign. All art, however, by slow degrees, becomes at last a second nature; and so likewise, as thou wilt find, does the art of prayer. And when thou shalt have attained to such proficiency, then thou wilt "neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father," but wilt raise the memorial of His name at any spot on the face of the earth.[2]

Soul, bid thy tossings cease!
Down in the deep profound,
Sink to thy being's ground,
And there find peace.

[1] C. C. Fraser-Tytler. [2] A. Tholuck.

Thy God is at thy side!
Offshoot of Him thou art,
And so with thee His heart
Must still abide.

2. *The art of praying as we ought.*—"For we know not how to pray as we ought." This clause, depending on the principal one, —"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity"—makes it clear that the weakness which the Spirit helps is due to our ignorance. In the Greek, the whole clause "how to pray as we ought" is the object of the verb "we know not." We are brought here, then, to a consideration of our *ignorance in asking.*

¶ I heard lately of a beautiful instance of a poor man's trust in the sufficiency of God's understanding. A sudden storm had overtaken an East Coast fishing fleet, causing them to run for shelter. All got safely home except one boat belonging to an old man who was alone on board it. An anxious crowd gathered at the pier head, but there was no sign of the frail craft on the tumbling waters. At last, when hope had nearly died, it was discerned coming in, and in due time, amid a breathless suspense, reached haven. The old man was plied with questions as to how he had managed to win safely through, and some one asked, "Did ye pray?" "Ay," said the old fisherman, "I prayed." "What did ye say?" asked the questioner. "Weel," was the reply, "I hadna ony great wale o' words, but I just said to the Lord that surely He wouldna forget an *auld* man in an *open* boat in *sic a sea as this.*"[1]

(1) Broadly speaking, we do know what we are to pray for—the perfecting of salvation, but we do not know what we are to pray for "as we ought"—according as the need is at the moment; we know the end, which is common to all prayers, but not what is necessary at each crisis of need in order to enable us to attain this end.

(2) Probably it is true to say that the advanced Christian learns to pray more definitely for spiritual things as he grows in spiritual discernment and sees more distinctly what God's moral will is for himself and others. But there is no similar growth to be expected in the knowledge of what outward gifts will really help or hinder us and others. And it is with his eye chiefly on the outward conditions of the Christian's life that

[1] Arch. Alexander.

St. Paul here says that we know not what we should pray for as we ought; and teaches us that the Spirit "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." We must be content to recognize, even while we half-ignorantly pray for what we think we need, that "all (outward) things work together for good to them that love God." St. Paul had learned that lesson when he himself "besought the Lord thrice" that his great physical trouble might be removed from him, and was refused. The Son of Man Himself prayed only "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and learned in experience that it was not possible. These lessons may suffice to humble any one who grows over-confident that he knows what outward circumstances are best for himself or his friends or the Church.

Whichever way the wind doth blow,
Some heart is glad to have it so;
Then blow it east or blow it west,
The wind that blows, that wind is best.

My little craft sails not alone;
A thousand fleets from every zone
Are out upon a thousand seas;
And what for me were favouring breeze
Might dash another, with the shock
Of doom, upon some hidden rock.
And so I do not dare to pray
For winds to waft me on my way,
But leave it to a Higher Will
To stay or speed me; trusting still
That all is well, and sure that He
Who launched my bark will sail with me
Through storm and calm, and will not fail
Whatever breezes may prevail,
To land me, every peril past,
Within His sheltering Heaven at last.

Then whatsoever wind doth blow,
My heart is glad to have it so;
And blow it east or blow it west,
The wind that blows, that wind is best.[1]

¶ Grant, O my God, that in uniform equanimity of mind I may receive whatever happens; since we know not what we

[1] Caroline Atherton Mason.

should ask, and since I cannot wish for one thing more than another without presumption, and without setting up myself as a judge, and making myself responsible for those consequences which Thy wisdom has determined properly to conceal from me. O Lord, I know that I know but one thing; and that is, that it is good to follow Thee, and evil to offend Thee! After that, I know not what is better or worse in anything; I know not what is more profitable for me, sickness or health, wealth or poverty, nor any other of the things of this world. This was a discovery beyond the power of men or angels; it is veiled in the secrets of Thy providence, which I adore, and which I do not desire to fathom.[1]

3. *Praying under the direction of the Holy Spirit.*—There are four very simple lessons that the believer who would enjoy the blessing of being taught to pray by the Spirit of prayer must know.

(1) Let us believe that the Spirit dwells in us. Deep in the inmost recesses of his being, hidden and unfelt, every child of God has the Holy, Mighty Spirit of God dwelling in him. He knows it by faith, the faith that, accepting God's word, realizes that of which he sees as yet no sign. "We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." As long as we measure our power for praying aright and perseveringly by what we feel or think we can accomplish, we shall be discouraged when we hear of how much we ought to pray. But when we quietly believe that, in the midst of all our conscious weakness, the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of supplication is dwelling within us, for the very purpose of enabling us to pray in such manner and measure as God would have us pray, our hearts will be filled with hope. We shall be strengthened in the assurance, which lies at the very root of a happy and fruitful Christian life, that God has made an abundant provision for our being what He wants us to be. We shall begin to lose our sense of burden and fear and discouragement about praying sufficiently, because we see that the Holy Spirit Himself is praying in us.

(2) Let us beware above everything of grieving the Holy Spirit. If we do, how can He work in us the quiet, trustful, and blessed sense of that union with Christ which makes our prayers well-pleasing to the Father? Let us beware of grieving

[1] Blaise Pascal.

Him by sin, by unbelief, by selfishness, by unfaithfulness to His voice in conscience. The Holy Spirit Himself is the very power of God to make us obedient. The sin that comes up in us against our will, the tendency to sloth, or pride, or self-will, or passion that rises in the flesh, our will can, in the power of the Spirit, reject. Let us accept each day the Holy Spirit as our Leader and Life and Strength; we can count upon Him to do in our heart all that ought to be done there. He, the Unseen and Unfelt One, but known by faith, gives there, unseen and unfelt, the love and the faith and the power of obedience we need, because He reveals Christ unseen within us, as actually our Life and Strength. Let us also see to it that we grieve not the Holy Spirit by distrusting Him, because we do not feel His presence in us. Especially in the matter of prayer let us grieve Him not. That is the best and truest prayer, to put ourselves before God just as we are, and to count on the hidden Spirit praying in us. "We know not how to pray as we ought"; ignorance, difficulty, struggle, mark our prayer all along. But, "the Spirit helpeth our infirmity." "The Spirit Himself" deeper down than our thoughts or feelings, "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." When we cannot find words, when our words appear cold and feeble let us just believe: The Holy Spirit is praying in us. Let us be quiet before God, and give Him time and opportunity; in due season we shall learn to pray.

(3) Let us be filled with the Spirit. It is only the healthy spiritual life that can pray aright. The command comes to each of us: "Be filled with the Spirit." That implies that while some rest content with the beginning, with a small measure of the Spirit's working, it is God's will that we should be filled with the Spirit. That means, from our side, that our whole being ought to be entirely yielded up to the Holy Spirit, to be possessed and controlled by Him alone; and, from God's side, that we may count upon and expect the Holy Spirit to take possession and fill us. Has not our failure in prayer evidently been owing to our not having accepted the Spirit of prayer to be our life; to our not having yielded wholly to Him, whom the Father gave as the Spirit of His Son, to work the life of the Son in us?

(4) Last of all, let us pray in the Spirit for all saints. The

Spirit, who is called "the Spirit of supplication," is also and very specially the Spirit of intercession. It is said of Him, "the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." "He maketh intercession for the saints." It is the same word as is used of Christ, "who also maketh intercession for us." The thought is essentially that of mediation—one pleading for another. When the Spirit of intercession takes full possession of us, all selfishness—as if we wanted to have Him separate from His intercession for others, and to have Him for ourselves alone—is banished, and we begin to avail ourselves of our wonderful privilege to plead for men. We long to live the Christ-life of self-consuming sacrifice for others, as our heart unceasingly yields itself to God to obtain His blessing for those around us. Intercession then becomes, not an incident or an occasional part of our prayers, but their one great object. Prayer for ourselves then takes its true place, simply as a means of fitting us better for exercising our ministry of intercession more effectually.

¶ To intercede is to be like the Spirit, to breathe His atmosphere and temper, to join hands with the Advocate above. Intercession is a priestly benediction in which the youngest Christian can exercise his priestly office. Intercession is an offering of love. Intercession is sacrificial.[1]

¶ Christ suffers not that one should pray for himself alone, but for the whole community of all men. For He teaches us to say, not, "My Father," but "Our Father." Prayer is a spiritual, common possession; therefore we must despoil no one of it, not even our enemies. For as He is the Father of us all, He wills that we shall be brothers amongst each other, and pray for one another, as for ourselves.[2]

She prays so long! She prays so late!
  What sin in all this flower-land
  Against her supplicating hand
Could have in heaven any weight?

Prays she for her sweet self alone?
  Prays she for some one far away,
  Or some one near and dear to-day,
Or some poor, lorn, lost soul unknown?

[1] J. F. Vallings.

[2] Martin Luther.

It seems to me a selfish thing
  To pray for ever for one's self;
  It seems to me like heaping pelf
In heaven by hard reckoning.

Why, I would rather stoop, and bear
  My load of sin, and bear it well,
  And bravely down to burning hell,
Than ever pray one selfish prayer![1]

[1] Cincinnatus Hiner Miller.

Love's Prosperity.

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Love's Prosperity.

We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.—Rom. viii. 28.

I.

All for Good.

"All things work together for good."

i. All things.

The phrase is to be taken in the widest possible sense. It includes everything mentioned in verses 35, 38, 39. We naturally think of "all things" as sharply divided into two parts. There are the *dark* things of life and there are the *bright* things. But St. Paul says "*all* things work together for good."

1. *The dark things.*—The reference of the text is perhaps more especially to the dark side of things, because the early Christians were more familiar with this aspect. Now, St. Paul's philosophy of the facts of life is this, that, amid these earthly scenes, the upright, the humble, the pure are in process of being prepared for the power and glory of an endless life. This is his explanation of the world so far as the children of God are concerned with it. Bodily pain, mental disquiet, the secret grief, the burden, bitterness, heaviness that lies upon the heart, behind the mask, often, of a smiling face, the whole complement of experience, is steadily and surely leading up toward a day of interpretation.

¶ When Jacob's sons returned to Canaan, and told him what had befallen them in Egypt, they seemed to infect him with their own fear. He refused to see anything but the dark side of things. There is a plaintive cadence in his words—

> Me have ye bereaved of my children:
> Joseph is not, and Simeon is not,
> And ye will take Benjamin away:
> All these things are against me. (Gen. xlii. 36.)

And he adds forebodings of mischief, grey hairs, sorrow, and Sheol (ver. 38). Melancholy Jacob's faith is not yet perfected. Nursing his sorrow, saturating his mind with self-pity, he finds a dreary pleasure in counting his troubles, and inferring that they are all (the grand total is three!) against him; while we, who know how the drama is unfolding, perceive that all the things in question, and many more, are working together for his good, and that he will live to confess that God has redeemed him out of all evil. God conceals "His bright designs" in order that His servants may learn to trust Him in the dark as well as in the light. It has been finely said, by George Macdonald, that "the secrets God keeps must be as good as those He tells." And as our knowledge of Him increases, we find, with Whittier,

> That more and more a providence
> Of love is understood,
> Making the springs of time and sense
> Sweet with eternal good.[1]

> Hours there will come of soulless night,
> When all that's holy, all that's bright,
> Seems gone for aye:
> When truth and love, and hope and peace,
> All vanish into nothingness,
> And fade away.
>
> Fear not the cloud that veils the skies,
> 'Tis out of darkness light must rise,
> As e'er of old:
> The true, the good, the fair endure,
> And thou, with eyes less dim, more pure,
> Shalt them behold.[2]

The Apostle does not ignore or belittle the disorder and evil that exist; he concedes that the constitution and course of things is not perfectly satisfactory, that man is born to trouble, and that society is full of confusion and sin; he only asks us to postpone sentence upon the facts until the time when an intelligent decision will be possible. The philosophical doctrine called Pessimism,—that the world, if not the worst possible, is worse than none at all—finds no countenance in the Bible. Nevertheless the Bible recognizes the deep and awful disorder that prevails, and the evil that clings to both man and nature.

[1] J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, pt. ii. 125. [2] F. M. White.

Love understands the mystery, whereof
We can but spell a surface history:
Love knows, remembers: let us trust in Love:
Love understands the mystery.

Love weighs the event, the long pre-history,
Measures the depth beneath, the height above,
The mystery, with the ante-mystery.

To love and to be grieved befits a dove
Silently telling her bead-history:
Trust all to Love, be patient and approve:
Love understands the mystery.[1]

2. *The bright things.*—When St. Paul says "All things work together for good to them that love God," he is not taking a merely negative view of life. It is not only of trials and calamities, of losses and sufferings, that he is speaking. He does not say all trials, but all things—health, strength, youth, beauty and intellect, vigour of mind and vigour of body.

¶ Do honour to your bodies. Reverence your physical natures, not simply for themselves. Only as ends they are not worthy of it, but because in health and strength lies the true basis of noble thought and glorious devotion. A man thinks well and loves well and prays well, because of the rich running of his blood.[2]

¶ We should be as happy as possible, and our happiness should last as long as possible; for those who can finally issue from self by the portal of happiness know infinitely wider freedom than those who pass through the gate of sadness.[3]

¶ One shivering evening, cold enough for frost, but with too high a wind, and a little past sundown, when the lamps were beginning to enlarge their circles in the growing dusk, a brace of barefooted lassies were seen coming eastward in the teeth of the wind. If the one was as much as nine, the other was certainly not more than seven. They were miserably clad; and the pavement was so cold you would have thought no one could lay a naked foot on it unflinching. Yet they came along waltzing, if you please, while the elder sang a tune to give them music. The person who saw this, and whose heart was full of bitterness at the moment, pocketed a reproof which has been of use to him

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.
[2] Phillips Brooks.
[3] Maurice Maeterlinck.

ever since, and which he now hands on, with his good wishes, to the reader.[1]

Spirit of sacred happiness,
Who makest energy delight,
And love to be in weakness might;
Now with enlivening impulse bless,
Now re-confirm our steadfastness,
And make us vigorous and bright.[2]

ii. Working together for Good.

1. Now first observe a very important distinction. St. Paul does not assert that all things are good, but he does affirm that all things *work together* for the ultimate good. Even the most apparently insignificant affairs in life work out for our greatest benefit in the future. Something that occurs to-day may be the beginning of a series of circumstances which will not come to fruition for the next twenty years, but the next twenty years will prove how essential the almost unnoticed circumstance was for our later good. One of the most interesting features of history is to observe how things of an apparently opposite nature have worked together for some universal benefit—things which at first sight could scarcely have been believed to have any possible connection with each other. And yet they have been as closely connected as the links of a chain or the cog-wheels that work into each other in a piece of machinery.

¶ When the physician has prescribed some medicine, we go to the chemist to have it made up; and he takes one ingredient from this phial, and another from that, and another from elsewhere; any one of these taken alone might kill us outright, but when they have been well compounded and mixed they work together for a perfect cure.[3]

¶ All that is harmony for thee, O universe, is in harmony with me as well. Nothing that comes at the right time for thee is too early or too late for me.[4]

The Summum Pulchrum rests in heaven above;
Do thou, as best thou may'st, thy duty do;
Amid the things allowed thee live and love;
Some day thou shalt it view.[5]

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Notes on Edinburgh.*
[2] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 90.
[3] F. B. Meyer.
[4] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations.*
[5] Clough.

2. In the second place, we must make no mistake about what St. Paul means by "good." When the Apostle declares that all things work together for good, he is thinking of good in God's sense of that word. Happiness is one thing, good is another and a very different thing. Good in this sense will, in the long-run, no doubt bring in its turn perfect blessedness; it will bring unsullied and unmixed joy; but good is not happiness, good is not freedom from strife, care, and pain. If we think that all things work together to give the godly man all he desires, to deliver him from trial, trouble, worry, and distress, to make him prosperous, smiling, contented with everything about him, and unruffled in temper, person, and estate, we entirely misread these words, and we shall in all probability be woefully disappointed.

Many think that the chief end of life is to secure ease and happiness, and they say that the object of all our social and political endeavours should be to provide the greatest possible amount of happiness for the greatest number. That may be good utilitarianism, but it is not Christianity. It is not the Divine idea. If this world had been intended mainly to make the people who live in it perfectly happy, we can only say that it has been constructed on wrong principles. We can easily conceive of a world in which there would be much more happiness than there has ever been, or ever will be, in this. God has a higher purpose. It is to make the world a moral school, a training-place for character; a place in which patience may be learned, and righteousness and strength of soul, and Christ-likeness; a training-place which is to prepare for a better and fuller life hereafter. Those who are called after God's purpose are called for this—to be conformed to the image of Christ. And St. Paul was thinking of this end, and of this end only, when he used the words, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

¶ For some of us, perhaps, those words may be associated with a feeling of impatience. We may have heard them used with a narrow view of good, and of the lovers of God, or with a deficient sense of the demand that is being made for faith and farsightedness, or with some lack of that deep and burning reality whereby heart speaks to heart, and wins an answering of assent. But they are among the words that experience fills with light—the words that are real to us in proportion as we ourselves are real. Only

let us try to have a right judgment as to what good is, and we shall find that there is no sort of trouble that may not work for good to those whose hearts are set, though it be but timidly, towards God; to those who love Him, though it be but vaguely, and who long to know and love Him more. If good meant only comfort and success and security and satisfaction with one's self, and a life without harassing or pain, the words would be false in principle and in fact. But if good means that for which men were made; if it means purity of heart, and unselfishness, and nearness and likeness to God and liberty and peace, and the power to help others, and the beginning or faint forecast of the life of heaven amidst the things of earth, then one need not live long to see how the words come true. Even the strangest miseries, the saddest hours, the bitterest disappointments, do work for good in this, the one true sense. God sees to it that those who want to serve Him better are not blinded or overborne by these things; in His pity He shows them what the trouble really means, He releases for them the blessing that is hidden in it. And so that great love of His, which no violence can wrench aside from the souls He seeks, fulfils itself in many ways; even the wildest tumult of this world is constrained and overruled to do Him service; and men look back to the days that were full of anguish and perplexity as the very time when He did most for them—the dawn of clearer light within their hearts, the awaking to truer thoughts of life and higher aims, the first guiding of their feet into the way of peace.[1]

¶ Have you seen that beautiful play called *Eagerheart*? The little heroine of the piece has set her heart on entertaining the King in her little room. When she has got everything ready, a poor tired workman comes with his wife and child, very badly dressed, looking very worn and footsore, and says: "Will you take me in for to-night?" Poor little Eagerheart, who has prepared everything for her King, says: "Not to-night; any night except to-night." "Oh," says the poor man, "that is what they all say! I have been all through this city, and they have all said 'Any night except to-night.'" Then the poor little woman's heart melts. "Oh, well, come in, come in! Farewell, my idle dream!" she cries, disappointed, broken-hearted, to think she has lost her chance. Then follow the shepherds and the wise men, and, to her astonishment, they come in their search for the King—to her door; and she says: "But there must be some mistake. This is my poor little humble dwelling; there is no King here." "Yes," the wise men say, "he is here." And there

[1] Francis Paget, *The Redemption of War*, 66.

in a blaze of glory, was the infant King of Kings, whom she had taken in in her disappointment.[1]

II.

Reciprocal Love.

"Them that love God." "Them that are called."

Here St. Paul presents the two complementary aspects of the religious life. There is the human side of the relation, "love," and the Divine side, "the call." While St. Paul has already spoken of the love of God to us, he has not before mentioned our love to God, and this is the only instance in Romans. He speaks several times of love to others (xii. 9, 10; xiii. 8, 9). He has mentioned faith again and again; hope has just been his theme; and now he completes the trinity of graces by mentioning love. It has been noted that he says much more about faith in God than love to God; but, in laying the foundation doctrines of the Christian life, faith must necessarily be more prominent, and faith in God must surely be accompanied by love to God. The grace which faith grasps shows and gives the love of God, and God's love must needs awaken in man its own likeness, man's love, which cannot be directed merely outward to his fellows, but must also return upward to the Giver.

i. Our love to God.

1. "To them that love God"—but there are many who say, "We do not, we cannot love God. We love wife, child, mother, friend, more, far more, than we love the Infinite Abstraction called God, whom no man hath seen at any time." Now, such people are making a difficulty which does not exist. God has not called upon us to love an Infinite Abstraction. Let them be thankful that they do know human love. Such love is no bad foundation; for this love, when real, is nature at her highest, and nature is also Divine, and is the pioneer to the higher. First that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual, is the Divine order. But the Invisible Parent Spirit has anticipated our objection. He has presented Himself to us under a form which, when recognized,

[1] Bishop Winnington Ingram.

must take our hearts captive, and which appeases the soul's yearning desire for personality in the Being who is universal.

¶ In Jesus, the whole moral life of the Absolute is manifested in integrity and completeness. Can we not love Him? Can we not go even as far as Renan, whom no man would accuse of superstition, credulity, or theological narrowness? And Renan, in his *Vie de Jésus*, apostrophizes the Incarnate One in these words: "Thou Jesus shalt become the corner-stone of humanity, inasmuch as to tear Thy name from the world would be to shake it to its very foundations; no more shall men distinguish between Thee and God."[1]

Begin from first when He encradled was
In simple cratch, wrapt in a wad of hay,
Between the toilful ox and humble ass,
And in what rags, and in how base array,
The glory of our heavenly riches lay,
When Him the silly shepherds came to see,
Whom greatest princes sought on lowest knee.

From thence read on the story of His life,
His humble carriage, His unfaulty ways,
His cancred foes, His flights, His toil, His strife
His pains, His poverty, His sharp assayes,
Through which He passed His miserable days.
Offending none, and doing good to all,
Yet being maliced both of great and small.

Then thou shalt feel thy spirit so possessed
And ravished with devouring great desire
Of His dear self, that shall thy feeble breast
Inflame with love, and set them all on fire
With burning zeal, through every part entire,
That in no earthly thing shalt thou delight,
But in His sweet and amiable sight.[2]

2. If at any time we should be shaken in our conviction of the blessed end of God's dealing, by the fear that we do not satisfy the condition of loving Him, then let us remember that this love is not so much a feeling as a posture or habit of the soul. It is clinging to Him. And if He should seem too distant to be grasped, too remote for us to touch even the hem of His garment, so that we cry, "Oh that I knew where I might find him, that

[1] B. Wilberforce. [2] Spenser.

I might come even to his seat!" then let us still further remember that the essence of love is obedience: "This is love, that we should walk after his commandments." And if we seek to follow His guidance, and submit ourselves to His hand, if we are willing to be made what we wish to become, and to be fashioned after the image of Christ, He will make good His word to us, and perfect that which concerneth us.

¶ Perhaps there is no better daily prayer for the Christian than the collect of St. Gelasius: "O God, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding: Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

3. It is the Divine love that draws the human. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "We love, because he first loved us." Our immediate consciousness is just this; we love. Not, we have read the book of life; we have had a glimpse of the eternal purpose in itself; we have heard our names recited in a roll of the chosen; but, we love. We have found in Him the eternal Love. In Him we have peace, purity, and that deep, final satisfaction, that view of "the king in his beauty," which is the *summum bonum* of the creature. It was our fault that we saw it no sooner, that we loved Him no sooner. It is the duty of every soul that He has made to reflect upon its need of Him, and upon the fact that it owes it to Him to love Him in His holy beauty of eternal love. If we could not it was because we would not. If we cannot it is because, somehow or other, we will not—will not put ourselves without reserve in the way of the vision. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good."

Because Love is the fountain, I discern
The stream as love: for what but love should flow
From fountain Love? not bitter from the sweet!
I ignorant, have I laid claim to know?
Oh teach me, Love, such knowledge as is meet
For one to know who is fain to love and learn.[1]

[1] C. G. Rossetti.

ii. God's love to us.

1. Those who simply and genuinely love God are also, on the other side, purpose-wise, His called ones. They are not merely invited, but brought in; not evangelized only, but converted. In the case of each of the happy company—the man, the woman, who came to Christ, came to love God with the freest possible coming of the will, the heart. Yet each, having come, had the Lord to thank for the coming. The human personality had traced its orbit of will and deed as truly as when it willed to sin and to rebel. But lo, in ways past our finding out, its free track lay along a previous track of the purpose of the Eternal; its free "I will" was the precise and fore-ordered correspondence to His "Thou shalt." It was an act of man; it was the grace of God.

2. With this lesson of uttermost humiliation, the truth of the heavenly Choice, and its effectual Call, brings us also an encouragement altogether Divine. Such a "purpose" is no fluctuating thing, shifting with the currents of time. Such a call to such an embrace means a tenacity, as well as a welcome, worthy of God. "Who shall separate us?" "And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." That is the motive of the words in this wonderful context, where everything is made to bear on the safety of the children of God, in the midst of all imaginable dangers.

¶ Have you not stood sometimes amidst the scene of an awful tragedy; some ancient castle to which has clung the story of dreadful wrong? And, lo, about the walls the ivy creeps, and in the crevices the flowers cluster; and the happy song of the birds and the cooing of doves has gladdened the loneliness; and forth from the ancient towers you have looked across the meadows where the cattle lie, and past the winding river to the silvery sea. Over all the scene was sunshine, stillness, and beauty. Nature had bent in pity and covered up the shame, and breathed about it all a perfect peace. So is it that our Heavenly Father transforms us by His unceasing love and unwearied patience. He doth not slumber nor sleep. It means that no possibility of advantage is suffered to pass unused; no budding promise within us is neglected or withered by the frost; no lightest chance or opportunity of gain is thrown away. Ever watchful, ever careful,

ever eager for our greatest good, He that keepeth thee shall neither slumber nor sleep.[1]

On easy terms with law and fate,
For what must be I calmly wait,
And trust the path I cannot see,—
That God is good sufficeth me.

III.

KNOWING.

"We Know."

In a life like this, where nobody seems able to do more than conjecture, surmise, suppose, imagine, or speculate, it is a comfort to find even one man who can honestly declare he *knows*. And it is still more remarkable, and still more comforting, to find that what he knows is exactly that about which we have had most doubt. Hence no words in the Bible come to us with more welcome or more wonder than the words of the text. We often quote the words, not so much because we believe them as because we should like to believe them. We may envy the man who could announce them, as St. Paul did, with unhesitating, unquestioning conviction. His grand certainty really startles us, as well as the sweeping universality of the statement: "We *know* that to them that love God *all* things work together for good." If he had said "most things" we might have given a reluctant consent; but the "*all* things" puts a tremendous strain upon our faith.

¶ There is an old German tale which might be a parable of the purpose in our life of the unintelligible things. The story is told of a baron who, having grown tired of the gay and idle life of the Court, asked leave of his King to withdraw from it. He built for himself a fort on a rugged rock, beneath which rolled the Rhine. There he dwelt alone. He hung wires from one wing of the fort to the other, making an Æolian harp, on which the winds might play to solace him. But many days and nights had passed, and winds had come and gone, yet never had there been music from that harp. And the baron interpreted the silence as the sign of God's unremoved displeasure. One evening the sky was torn with

[1] M. G. Pearse.

wild hurrying clouds, the sun was borne away with a struggle, and as night fell a storm broke out which shook the very earth. The baron walked restlessly through his rooms in loneliness and disquiet. At length he went out into the night, but stopped short upon the threshold. He listened, and behold the air was full of music. His Æolian harp was singing with joy and passion high above the wildness and the storm. Then the baron *knew*. Those wires, which were too thick to give out music at the call of common days, had found their voice in a night of stress and storm.[1]

> You doubt if there be any God?
> Doubt is the torpid man's complaint;
> Still hibernating 'neath your clod,
> Your sins and virtues grow too faint.
> But come where life is all ablow:
> Be a murderer or a saint,
> And you will know.[2]

Who of us, in the face of the broad features of everywhere-abounding suffering, dares to repeat the Apostle's words, or is able to say that he partakes of the bold confidence of his assertion? And yet, how desirable to be able to do so! For that man is certainly to be envied who can contemplate impending famine, pestilence, and war with unmoved confidence as to the issue; who can call to mind all our military establishments armed for conflict, our gaols with their usual quota of men of violence and crime, our madhouses and their deplorable inmates, our hospitals and their patients, our poorhouses and their mass of pauperism, the accidents and fatalities that attend our life, the destitution that everywhere abounds; the different forms of vice and crime that roam at large unassailable by our laws, and, in the presence of all, maintain unmoved that all things work together for good to those who love God.

¶ Fifty years or so before Christ, a cultivated Roman represents himself as discoursing pleasantly with his friends on the momentous question of the supreme good. With great skill and clearness he states and explains the views of the rival philosophers who had made this the subject of elaborate discussion. But, after a calm and dispassionate survey of the whole field, he puts down his pen without a word to indicate in which direction

[1] John A. Hutton, *Guidance from Browning*, 101.
[2] Anna Bunston.

his own preference lay. In this, perhaps, he represented the majority of the thoughtful men of his time. To them, life was a problem without any sure key to its solution, an arena on which incongruous and conflicting forces, whose laws and tendencies were alike inscrutable, played themselves out. It baffled speculation. It refused to be amenable to any theory.

About fifty years after Christ, or a century later, there were living in Rome and its adjacent districts a community of men who had arrived at the most novel and astonishing conclusions on this very point. Though they were few in number, of insignificant position, and counting scarcely any of the learned in their ranks, they were persuaded that all the complex and varied experiences of life were specially disposed to enable them to reach the highest blessedness, and they were not in the least doubt as to what that blessedness was. "We know," says the Apostle, speaking for his readers as well as for himself, "that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose."[1]

1. *How did St. Paul arrive at this state of certainty?*—When St. Paul says "*We know,*" he is speaking under a persuasion or conclusion to which he was compelled by his religious feeling rising to the degree and temperature of certainty. If God is such an one as we are obliged to believe Him to be, He will surely take care of His own. This is the argument. He frequently uses this formula, "We know." Thus he says, "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain . . . waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Again, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands." Again, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." He calls these high matters subjects of knowledge, but in the last analysis they belong to faith, an inward persuasion carried clear up to the threshold of certainty. This spiritual instinct, inward witness, secret inspiration which enabled St. Paul to declare "We know" in relation to invisible, eternal things, is a highly important possession and a rare endowment. There is too much conjecture and doubt in the matter of religious truths, and too little conviction and certitude. We do not get joy out of religion

[1] C. Moinet.

because we are not sure enough about it. Most Christians lack that private assurance which with St. Paul was equivalent to knowledge. This is a great defect in current religious experience; we grope in a fog, we set foot on a void, we do not feel solidity and resistance beneath our tread.

2. *How can we arrive at such a state of certainty?*

(1) In the first place, we must find an answer to another question—How do we know anything with certainty? Now, we can know a fact intuitively, such as that two straight lines having no inclination towards each other cannot intersect. Or we can know it upon premises of argument and deduction, as when a boy at school assents to a demonstration in Euclid. Or we may be said to know a fact by reason of confidence in the authority or veracity of others, belief in such a case becoming knowledge for all practical purposes.

(2) Now extend the same line of argument to the higher knowledge. It is noticeable that, as we approach the great leading principles and rules of life and conduct and the fundamental thinking that underlies our action, the mind is thrown more upon its own native original powers and capacities; it perceives, it seizes intuitively, in place of calling for laboured proofs and long deductions. For instance, take man himself, and what is good for him, what he ought to be, what type of character he ought to elaborate, how he ought to live and act; or take the idea of God, the Supreme Being, His existence, disposition, and attributes; or take nature, the external world of phenomena, its reality, its uses, value for man; take these large general conceptions that underlie all our life, and the nearer we approach them the more evident it becomes that if they are apprehended at all it must be by the quick instinct and native affinity of the mind for them. This was the origin of St. Paul's sanguine optimism. His conclusion was not a deliverance of any of the five organic senses; it was not necessarily supernatural inspiration; it was an inference from a set of rational premises. If there is a personal God, who loves rectitude, purity, goodness, then it follows that they also who love these things shall be at one with Him. This is surely a valid piece of reasoning, that God will not disown or ignore in the creature qualities which constitute His own essence

and glory. Such moral inconsistency is not conceivable in a being worthy of reverence and worship.

¶ "*We know*"—we may say with St. Paul—with the cognition of faith; that is to say, because God, absolutely trustworthy, guarantees it by His character, and by His word. Deep, even insoluble, is the mystery, from every other point of view. The lovers of the Lord are indeed unable to explain, to themselves or to others, how this concurrence of "all things" works out its infallible issues in them. And the observer from outside cannot understand their certainty that it is so. But the fact is there, given and assured, not by speculation upon events, but by personal knowledge of an Eternal Person. "Love God, and thou shalt know."[1]

[1] **Bishop Moule.**

The Inclusive Gift.

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The Inclusive Gift.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?—Rom. viii. 32.

1. The chapter from which these words are taken is full of encouragement and comfort. The Apostle's object, at least in the latter part of it, is to point out the peculiar privileges of believers, and the certainty of the foundation on which their hopes and prospects rest.

2. St. Paul seems to have in mind especially the outward condition of believers, as if the meanness of their external condition, and the peculiar trials and afflictions to which they are often exposed, might be looked upon as an objection to the truth and reality of those spiritual privileges of which he has shown that they were possessed, and as inconsistent with the special love and favour which God has been said to bear to them. In opposition to this notion, the Apostle shows, with conclusive reasoning and impressive eloquence, that everything connected with even their outward condition is the result of God's sovereign and gracious appointment. The whole of their history, and everything connected with them, composes a great scheme, originating in infinite love, arranged from eternity by infinite wisdom and executed in time by infinite power; and their various trials and afflictions, however numerous and remarkable, instead of being inconsistent with God's special love to them in Christ, are just proofs or expressions of it. For they are the means which infinite wisdom had selected as the best fitted, and which infinite power would certainly overrule, to promote the great object which God has in view in all His dealings with them, the bringing of them to that incorruptible and unfading inheritance which He has prepared for them that love Him.

I.

The Gift of His own Son.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

1. "Spared not."—In this word we have an allusion to, if not a distinct quotation from, the narrative in Genesis, of Abraham's offering up of Isaac. The same word which is employed in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, to translate the Hebrew word rendered in our Bible as "withheld," is employed here by the Apostle and rendered "spared not." And there is evidently floating before his mind the thought that, in some profound and real sense, there is an analogy between that wondrous and faithful act of giving up, and the transcendent and stupendous gift to the world, from God, of His Son.

The analogy seems to suggest to us, strange as it may be, and remote from the cold and abstract ideas of the Divine nature which it is thought to be philosophical to cherish, that something corresponding to the pain and loss that shadowed the patriarch's heart passed across the Divine mind when the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Not merely to give, but to give up, is the highest crown and glory of love, as we know it. And who shall venture to say that we so fully apprehend the Divine nature as to be warranted in declaring that some analogy to that is impossible for Him? Our language is, "I will not offer unto God that which doth cost me nothing." Let us bow in silence before the dim intimation that seems to flicker out of the words of the text, that so He says to us, "I will not offer unto you that which doth cost me nothing." "He spared not his own Son"—withheld Him not from us.

¶ While we must be careful to exclude from the idea conveyed by the language of the text anything like a struggle or conflict between opposite principles and feelings existing in the Divine mind, we are entitled, and even expected, to view the act of God in giving up His own Son with feelings substantially the same in kind as those with which we would contemplate an act of heroic self-denial, or of generous sacrifice, performed by one of our fellow-men for the advancement of our happiness.[1]

[1] W. Cunningham.

¶ There is a story of a poor family in Germany who were ready to perish in a time of famine. The husband proposed to the wife to sell one of their children for bread. At length she consented. But the difficulty arose—which of them should it be? The eldest was named. This was their first-born, and the beginning of their strength. The second was named. He was the living image of the father. The third was named. In him the features of the mother breathed. The last was named. He was their youngest, the child of their old age. They agreed to starve together rather than sacrifice one.

2. "His own Son."—The reality of the surrender is emphasized by the closeness of the bond which, in the mysterious eternity, knits together the Father and the Son. As with Abraham, so in this lofty example of which Abraham and Isaac were but as dim wavering reflections in water, the Son is His own Son. The force of the analogy and the emphasis of that word, which is even more emphatic in the Greek than in the English, "his *own* Son," point to a community of nature, to a uniqueness and singleness of relation, to a closeness of intimacy, to which no other is a parallel. And so we have to estimate the measure of the surrender by the tenderness and awfulness of the bond. "Having yet therefore one Son, his well-beloved, he sent him."

3. "Delivered him up."—The greatness of the surrender is made more emphatic by the contemplation of it in its negative and positive aspect, in the two successive clauses. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up," an absolute, positive giving of Him over to the humiliation of the life and to the mystery of the death.

(1) He delivered Him up to *Suffering*.—If it behoved Christ to become man, He might have been spared the trials that are generally the lot of men, trials which they very rightly deserve because of their sins. Let the one sinless Man be spared the sufferings that sinners meet with as their due. But no! Very few, if any, are the sufferings incident to human life that Jesus was exempted from. He was not spared the endurance of poverty. Into poverty He was born, in poverty He lived, and in poverty He died. Poorer than the foxes that had holes, and the birds of the air that had nests, He often had not where to lay His head.

(2) He delivered Him up to *Temptation.*—He was in all points tempted like as we are. Tempted to distrust God, tempted to presumption, tempted to worldliness. And very bitter enmity was His portion. Perhaps few have been more utterly detested than He was while in the world. It is true that for a time He was popular with the multitude, but, it would seem, only so long as they thought He would provide them with loaves and fishes. But the hatred that assailed Him was intense: it expressed itself in many vile and abusive epithets, in many false accusations, in many attempts, public and private, to take away His life.

(3) He delivered Him up to *Ingratitude.*—"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" That was only one instance out of multitudes in which those whom He benefited showed their utter unthankfulness. His own brethren did not believe in Him, but said that He was mad, and would have kept Him under restraint like a lunatic.

(4) He delivered Him up to *Death.*—He was spared nothing that could make His sufferings terrible: the treachery of Judas; the cowardice of the other Apostles; the barbarous, brutal treatment to which He was subjected by Herod, and by the soldiers under Pontius Pilate. Of all the deaths that man could die, there was none more torturing than the death of the cross, and there was none so degrading; He was not spared that. And to make it all the worse, to add to the contempt and shame, He was crucified between two thieves. Amply true are the Apostle's words, "God spared not his own Son."

Enough, my muse, of earthly things,
And inspirations but of wind;
Take up thy lute, and to it bind
Loud and everlasting strings,
And on them play, and to them sing,
The happy mournful stories,
The lamentable glories
Of the great crucified King!
Mountainous heap of wonders! which dost rise
Till earth thou joinest with the skies!
Too large at bottom, and at top too high,
To be half seen by mortal eye;
How shall I grasp this boundless thing?
What shall I play? What shall I sing?

I'll sing the mighty riddle of mysterious love,
Which neither wretched man below, nor blessed spirits above,
With all their comments can explain,
How all the whole world's life to die did not disdain!
I'll sing the searchless depths of the compassion divine,
The depths unfathomed yet
By reason's plummet, and the line of wit;
Too light the plummet, and too short the line;
How the eternal Father did bestow
His own eternal Son as ransom for His foe;
I'll sing aloud that all the world may hear
The triumph of the buried Conqueror;
How hell was by its prisoner captive led,
And the great slayer, Death, slain by the dead.

Methinks I hear of murdered men the voice
Mixed with the murderers' confused noise,
Sound from the top of Calvary;
My greedy eyes fly up the hill, and see
Who 'tis hangs there, the midmost of the three;
O! how unlike the others He;
Look! how He bends His gentle head with blessings from the tree,
His gracious hands, ne'er stretched but to do good,
Are nailed to the infamous wood!
And sinful man does fondly bind
The arms which He extends to embrace all human kind.[1]

4. "For us all."—He delivered Him up for us all. There was a national election of the Jew in which the Gentile had no part; but the drift of the Apostle's argument is that the highest blessing and the fulness of that blessing are for Jew and Gentile alike. The Gospel is catholic; it knows nothing of national predestination and privilege. If God gave His Son for us all, He will not distribute unequally the blessings which flow from that unspeakable gift. Whatever were the national and temporal blessings of the Jew, the Greek and barbarian shall equally share with him in the sovereign gifts of grace. And so the gifts of grace are not given unequally among the various classes of society. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." It is for the Christian Church to do its utmost to put all nations in possession of their spiritual inheritance.

[1] Abraham Cowley.

Soul, which to hell wast thrall,
He, He for thine offence
Did suffer death, who could not die at all.
O sovereign excellence!
O life of all that lives!
Eternal bounty, which all goodness gives!
How could Death mount so high?
No wit this point can reach;
Faith only doth us teach,
For us He died, at all who could not die.[1]

II.

With Him all Things.

"How shall he not also with him freely give us all things?"

After the gift of Jesus Christ, every other gift is comparatively a small matter. Abraham did not spare his son Isaac, but delivered him up to God. In his mind, in his heart, he surrendered him as truly as if he had slain him and burned him on the altar. And after that proof of love to God, do you suppose Abraham possessed anything that he would have been unwilling to give? If God had asked his flocks and his herds, his silver and his gold, we may well suppose that Abraham would have given all without a murmur. And God having given us Christ, we cannot imagine Him unwilling to bestow any favour that would really be a favour.

He will give all things for these reasons—

(1) The greater gift implies the less. We do not expect that a man who hands over a million pounds to another, to help him, will stick at a farthing afterwards. If you give a diamond you may well give a box to keep it in. In God's gift the lesser will follow the lead of the greater; and whatsoever a man can want, it is a smaller thing for Him to bestow, than was the gift of His Son.

¶ Southey told an anecdote of Sir Massey Lopes, which is a good story of a miser. A man came to him and told him he was in great distress, and £200 would save him. He gave him a draft for the money. "Now," says he, "what will you do with this?" "Go to the bankers and get it cashed." "Stop," said he,

[1] William Drummond.

"I will cash it." So he gave him the money, but first calculated and deducted the discount.[1]

¶ There is a beautiful contrast between the manners of giving the two sets of gifts implied in the words of the original, perhaps scarcely capable of being reproduced in any translation. The expression that is rendered, "freely give," implies that there is a grace and a pleasantness in the act of bestowal. God gave in Christ what we may reverently say it was something like pain to give. Will He not give the lesser gifts, whatever they may be, which it is the joy of His heart to communicate? The greater implies the less.[2]

(2) This one great gift draws all other gifts after it, because the purpose of the greater gift cannot be attained without the bestowment of the lesser. He does not begin to build and then find Himself unable to finish; He does not miscalculate His resources, or stultify Himself by commencing upon a large scale and then have to stop short before the purpose with which He began is accomplished. Men build great palaces and are bankrupt before the roof is put on. God lays His plans with the knowledge of His powers, and having first of all bestowed this large gift, is not going to have it bestowed in vain for want of some smaller ones to follow it up.

¶ Men are fond of distinguishing between general and particular providences. They are willing to acknowledge the finger of God in some striking event, or in the swift flashing out of God's sword of justice. They do not hesitate to admit that life as a whole is under God's direction; but they hesitate to say that He is concerned with its ordinary commonplaces, valueless as the sparrow's fall, slight as the hair of the head. Miles if you like; but not steps. But love refuses to believe this teaching. It looks on it as practical atheism. It feels that God cannot afford to let the thread of its life pass from His hands for a single moment.[3]

(3) This great blessing draws after it, by necessary consequence, all other lesser and secondary gifts, inasmuch as, in a very real sense, everything is included and possessed in Christ when we receive Him. "With him," says St. Paul, as if that gift laid in a man's heart actually enclosed within it, and had for its indispensable accompaniment, the possession of every

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, ii. 61.
[2] A. Maclaren. [3] F. B. Meyer.

smaller thing that a man can need. Jesus Christ is, as it were a great Cornucopia, a horn of abundance, out of which will pour, with magic affluence, all manner of supplies according as we require.

O world, great world, now thou art all my own,
In the deep silence of my soul I stay
The current of thy life, though the wild day
Surges around me, I am all alone;—
Millions of voices rise, yet my weak tone
Is heard by Him who is the Light, the Way,
All Life, all Truth, the centre of Love's ray;
Clamour, O Earth, the Great God hears my moan!
Prayer is the talisman that gives us all,
We conquer God by force of His own love,
He gives us all; when prostrate we implore—
The Saints must listen; prayers pierce Heaven's wall;
The humblest soul on earth, when mindful of
Christ's promise, is the greatest conqueror.[1]

1. *All things.*—All things are ours in Christ. All things necessary to our salvation from sin, to the purification of our nature, to the safety of our spirit amid infinite besetments, to the fulness of our joy, to our present and everlasting triumph, all are guaranteed in our Divine Redeemer. All other gifts are assured in the accomplished gift of Calvary. He who spared not His own Son will not withhold anything that is necessary for the completion of the gracious design. He who has laid the foundation at such amazing cost will not spare to complete the edifice.

(1) Whatever is necessary for our justification will be given. How vain are all our misgivings in the presence of the infinite sacrifice! Our sins are crimson in colour, colossal in magnitude, countless in number; yet let us once appreciate the merit and mercy of Calvary, and we know the peace of God which passeth understanding. Our city rivers are foul enough; but the Atlantic Ocean receives them into her emerald depths, purifies them from pollution, and imparts to them a strange splendour and song. Our city smoke belches forth by day and night, threatening to darken and defile the very heavens; but the ampler air refines the base vapours, they leave no shadow or spot, and lose themselves in the lights and colours and mysteries of the firmament.

[1] Maurice Francis Egan.

So are our sins swallowed up in the redeeming love, to be remembered against us no more. "It is God that justifieth, who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

(2) Whatever is necessary for our sanctification is sure. Great as is the task of perfecting a nature that has gone so utterly to the bad as ours, it is nevertheless gloriously possible in the infinite affluence of our ascended Lord. He now exerts the fulness of the Spirit, and saves to the uttermost all who come to Him. The doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature, apart from evangelical grace, is a dream of dreams, the most hopeless of ideals, the wildest of fictions, a mocking and cruel apocalypse of the bible of philosophy. But the perfectibility of man in the power of Him who has received the Spirit without measure is a doctrine we may welcome without doubt or fear.

(3) Whatever is necessary for our eternal life and glory is also freely given. Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us. Everything for the life that now is, everything for the life that is to come, is richly ours in our crucified and ascended Lord. The greatest possible act of God's love is the giving up of His Son; in that whatever else can be wished for lies enclosed.

¶ This is a democratic age—the people everywhere claim a full share in everything. After ages of slavery and feudalism, of monopoly and exclusion, the multitude are awaking to a sense of larger right and privilege. They claim their full share in the authority of the sceptre, in the distribution of wealth, in the spoils of knowledge, in the flowers of pleasure. Our day may in some wise remind us of the apostolic age, when narrow privilege gave way to cosmopolitan rights and gifts. But is the claim for right and privilege to go no farther than material things and political influence? Alas, if it stops there! The best things of all, the heavenly things, belong equally to all, and they must not be forgotten. In the faith of Christ we find peace of mind, purity of heart, strength to live nobly, victory over all things mean and base, patience, charity, humility, kindness, peace, and abounding hope; these are the gifts most earnestly to be coveted, the gifts without which other blessings are vain. What a glorious day will dawn when the democracy awake to their rights and privileges in the Kingdom of God—when they clamour for the sceptre of self-government, when they solicit the wisdom that is more

precious than rubies, when they array themselves in white raiment, when they agitate for the inner riches of love and light, of pureness and strength, which are the true riches! The rarest prizes are still largely unclaimed. The city of God awaits the democracy; its liberties and riches, its glories and joys, are theirs.[1]

2. *Freely.*—He will give all things freely. He gave us His dear Son freely. He did not even wait to be asked to deliver Him up for us all. The gift of Christ was no answer to prayer. It was the purely spontaneous bounty of God. Nowhere in Scripture can we discern the slightest reluctance or hesitation on God's part as to the bestowment of that gift, great as was the suffering which it cost the Giver as well as the Gift. It was not to a world all penitent and in tears, prostrate at His throne in anguish and despair, that God gave His well-beloved Son; but to a world still at enmity against Him, still disobedient, impenitent, hard-hearted. And yet He gave Him freely. And therefore we surely may not, must not, think of any unwillingness on God's part to give these other gifts. Freely? Yes, of course. Whatever God gives, He gives freely. He loveth a cheerful giver, for He is Himself a cheerful giver. And there is not a gift of grace, there is not a gift that concerns us, whether for time or for eternity, that He will not freely give with Christ to all who ask Him.

There are some hearts like wells, green-mossed and deep
As ever summer saw,
And cool their water is, yea, cool and sweet;
But you must come to draw.
They hoard not, yet they rest in calm content,
And not unsought will give;
They can be quiet with their wealth unspent,
So self-contained they live.

And there are some like springs, that bubbling burst
To follow dusty ways,
And run with offered cup to quench his thirst
Where the tired traveller strays;
That never ask the meadows if they want
What is their joy to give;
Unasked, their lives to other life they grant,
So self-bestowed they live.

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

And One is like the ocean, deep and wide,
Wherein all waters fall;
That girdles the broad earth, and draws the tide,
Feeding and bearing all.
That breeds the mists, that sends the clouds abroad,
That takes again to give;—
Even the great and loving heart of God,
Whereby all love doth live.

The vital things of nature, the manifold riches of sea and shore, of earth and sky, are free gifts. We often reason as if we had paid handsomely for all things, and then grumble as if we had got short measure; but it is the greatest possible blunder. If we reject free gifts, we must send back every beam of the sun, every drop of rain and flake of snow, every green leaf, every spray of blossom, every purple cluster, every golden sheaf. Neither does God sell His glorious gifts of intellect. There was no king's ransom ready in the house where Shakespeare was born. All may see that Heaven does not dispense its most splendid talents where wealth is, or greatness; the immortal painter, singer, or inventor is born in attic, cellar, or cottage into which no other royalty ever looked. And God does not sell anything that belongs to the realm of the soul. The principle of barter has no place in the highest world. If we thought to purchase the noblest things with silver or gold, with gifts or sacrifices, we are sternly reproved: "Thy money," thy goods, thy goodness, "perish with thee." And as it is not God's way to sell His glorious things to pride and greatness, we certainly have no ability to buy them. All is, must be, free.

¶ When in the days of your youth the infinite passion, for the first time, lit up its glow in you, was there anything that you could do for the maiden of your heart that you would not do? Was there anything that you esteemed too precious for the creature to whom you had given your heart? In giving where you had given your heart, your whole nature was in force, and was one pleasure. That is the basis of the "freely."[1]

3. *With Him.*—The expression "all things," unlimited as it is in the letter, must be limited in the spirit. Than the idea of God giving us all things that we might wish and ask for there could be nothing more perilous, more certain to prove destructive.

[1] John Pulsford.

What would become of us if God were in this unqualified manner to give us all things? There are in the text two words that are very important. They are the words "with him,"—"shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" The "all things" that He will give us are all things with Christ, and the expression suggests a certain relationship of congruity or fitness. Suppose a man makes his son a present of a microscope, the probability is that he will, with the instrument, give him all the apparatus necessary for making full use of the instrument. Or if he gave his son a house, he might, perhaps, with the house give him the furniture suitable for it, that so he might with comfort live in the house that was given him. And God will give us, and freely give us, all things with Christ, all things that are connected with the gift of Christ, all things that will make the gift of Christ of practical service to us. So all things with Christ are all things that stand related to Christ, and to the purpose which God in the gift of Christ has in view.

I would be quiet, Lord,
  Nor tease, nor fret;
Not one small need of mine
  Wilt Thou forget.

I am not wise to know
  What most I need;
I dare not cry too loud,
  Lest Thou shouldst heed;

Lest Thou at length shouldst say,
  "Child, have thy will;
As thou hast chosen, lo!
  Thy cup I fill!"

What I most crave, perchance
  Thou wilt withhold;
As we from hands unmeet
  Keep pearls, or gold;

As we, when childish hands
  Would play with fire,
Withhold the burning goal
  Of their desire.

Yet choose Thou for me—Thou
Who knowest best;
This one short prayer of mine
Holds all the rest![1]

"With Him," observe; not without Him. It may be that, without Christ, God will in His providence give us many things, and many good things too. He may give us health, He may give us riches, He may give us much worldly comfort and prosperity. But these His best gifts, really far the best, the gifts of His grace, in forgiveness, holiness, life eternal, He gives only with Christ, only to those who in faith and thankfulness accept Christ.

¶ There is often a strange coldness and unbelief in men when precious things are pressed upon them. One of our later poets has noticed this blindness and insensibility:

A dog will take
The bone you throw to him; a mortal stares
In obstinate hostility if one,
Longing to swell the number of his joys,
From laden hand beseech him to be blest.
Teach men to suffer, and the slaves are apt;
Give them fresh hope, entreat them to delight,
They grow as stubbornly insensible
As miser to a beggar's eloquence,
Clutching their clownish imbecility
As the gods grudged them that.

¶ But surely this unwillingness to accept high blessing brought to our very doors finds its last and strangest expression in the insensibility of men to the gift of God in Christ! Let us thankfully, exultantly, promptly, open our heart to the full noon of spiritual blessing which shines upon us in the Son of God.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking;
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.[2]

[1] Julia C. R. Dorr. [2] Lowell.

No Case.

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No Case.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is [even] at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.—Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Before anything can be done with these verses it is necessary that some attention should be given to their punctuation. That the punctuation is difficult, no one will deny. The Revised Version, putting only a semicolon after "justifieth," throws together the two clauses—"It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? That is not satisfactory. In the margin of that version the first of these clauses is turned into a question. According to this suggestion the two verses would contain four questions, going two and two together. Thus—(1) Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? (2) Who is he that shall condemn? Shall Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us? This method is followed by Bishop Moule in the Expositor's Bible, who says, "We adopt the interrogative rendering of all the clauses here: it is equally good as grammar, and far more congenial to the glowing context." Professor Roberts, who was one of the Revisers, adopts the same punctuation and tells the following story: A friend who visited Archbishop Whately when near his end writes as follows: "The Sunday before his death he seemed unconscious, and I read Romans viii. (a chapter for which he has asked more than once during his illness). Instinctively I read verses 33 and 34 as he had taught me to do: 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Is it God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Is it Christ that died?' The eyes of the dying man opened for a moment. 'That is quite right,' he whispered." [1]

[1] *Clergyman's Magazine*, 3rd Ser., xii. 253.

To take all the clauses as questions does appear to bring out the Apostle's meaning. But the same result may be produced more easily by supplying two words which were in the Apostle's thought, but which, in the rapidity of writing, he did not insert. Let us insert these two words in brackets—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? [God?]. God is he that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? [Christ?]. Christ Jesus is he that died."

St. Paul's argument is that against God's elect there is no case. Why is there no case? He gives two sufficient reasons.

First, who is to bring a charge against them? Their sin is against God, therefore none but God has any interest in bringing a charge against them or any right to bring it. Will God bring a charge? God has already justified them. He has acquitted them of every charge and declared them righteous.

Second, if a charge is brought who is to condemn them? The judge is Christ, and there is no other. Will Christ condemn them? Christ Jesus is the very person who has by His death, resurrection, session, and intercession made sure that they shall not be condemned.

I.

The Charge.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

1. Who is the charge supposed to be laid against? God's elect. And who are God's elect?

(1) God's elect are not the self-elect. Look at these two men, the Pharisee and the publican. Says the Pharisee, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican", says the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "I tell you"—this is the judgment of Jesus—"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." For the Lord seeth not as man seeth. The Pharisee, self-elect, is Divinely reprobate. The publican, self-reprobate, is Divinely elect. Or look at the prodigal—what self-accusation, what self-condemnation—"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." And where is the father's condemnation? There is no condemnation. The

father falls on his son's neck, and kisses him, and then cries commandingly to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found." Behold a type, a representative of the elect of God!

All this costly expense
For a few white souls forgiven,
For a smiling throng of a few elect,
White harpers harping in heaven.

Lord, Thy glance is wide,
And Thy wide arms circle the whole,
Shall out of Thy net of loving glide
One wand'ring human soul?[1]

(2) God's elect have also elected Him. His choice of them always issues in their choice of Him. Hence there comes in here a question. You ask whether God has chosen you. I ask whether you have chosen God. You let me put a finger upon your pulse; let me sound the beating of your heart. Is there no Godward throbbing there—no outbreathing of desire? That desire was not self-originated. It was grace, not nature, that inspired it. "We love him." How? Why? "Because he first loved us." He is always first. Your desire for Him, your choice of Him is but responsive to His desire for you, His choice of you. Let not the thought of the Divine election trouble you. God in Christ is on your side. Get up to this high tower, and from its summit ring out the challenge without doubt or dread—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?"

¶ Your distress is that God Almighty knows from eternity who will be saved. Which is true, for He knows all things—the drops in the sea, the stars in heaven, the roots, branches, twigs, leaves of every tree; He has numbered the hairs of all heads. From this you conclude that, do what you will, good or bad, God knows already whether you will be saved or not: which is true. And, further, you think more of damnation than of salvation; and thereupon you despair, and know not how God

[1] Hannah Parker Kimball, *Two Points of View.*

is minded towards you. Wherefore I, as a servant of my dear Lord Jesus Christ, write you this, that you may know how God the Almighty is minded towards you. God Almighty does know all things, so that all worlds and thoughts in all creatures must happen according to His will. But His earnest will, and mind, and decree, ordered from eternity, is "that all men shall be saved," and shall become partakers of eternal joy. God willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live. If, then, He willeth that sinners, wherever they live and wander under the broad high heavens, should be saved, will you, by a foolish thought, suggested by the devil, sunder yourself from all these, and from the grace of God? God the Father Himself, with His own finger, points out to you how He is minded towards you, when, with loud, clear voice, He cries, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And even if you were ever so hard and deaf, and, as a despairing man turned to stone, could not look up to heaven, or hear God the Father calling to you on those heights, yet can you not fail to hear the Son, who stands in the highway by which every one may pass, and, as with a mighty trumpet, calls, "*Venite*—Come, come."[1]

Love makes the life to be
A fount perpetual of virginity;
For, lo, the Elect
Of generous Love, how named soe'er, affect
Nothing but God,
Or mediate or direct
Nothing but God,
The Husband of the Heavens;
And who Him love, in potence great or small,
Are, one and all,
Heirs of the Palace glad,
And inly clad
With the bridal robes of ardour virginal.[2]

2. What is the charge? *Anything.* The Apostle looks over the entire history of life from first to last; he does not confine himself to the consideration of a particular portion of it; he does not confine himself to the consideration of a particular aspect of it; he views it in the light of the law with its changeless sanctions, in the light of eternity with its retributive decisions; he arraigns it before God in the perfection of His nature and government, in the very perfection of His entire judicial administration, and, as

[1] Luther. [2] Coventry Patmore.

dauntless as ever, he comes forth like the old champion with this sweeping, absolute, universal challenge, "Who shall lay anything" —*anything*—"to the charge of God's elect?" Are there not thousands of things which may be made matter of charge against them? May not everything in their life-history from the day of their birth be made matter of charge against them? Yes, everything. No, nothing.

3. Who makes the charge? The Apostle seems at first to look round the universe—Who is he that shall dare to do it? He does not confine himself to the world, he does not confine himself to time, he projects himself into eternity with all its spiritual intelligences, powers, realities; he faces "death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, any other creation," every other creation; and, dauntless, like a hero-champion in full armour who offers himself for combat to any one who will enter the lists with him, he throws down the gauntlet. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Every mouth is stopped. Every mouth but one. God Himself may bring this charge. No one else has the right—has He? No, not even God can make a charge against His own elect. For has He not justified them? He is the very last person to be likely to make it.

¶ St. Paul, you see, has no doubt at all about this point. He says boldly, "It is God that justifieth." That is as much as to say, "I know, verily, that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is on our side; that He takes our part. And, therefore, I do not care who takes the other side; there may be a host of enemies that seek to destroy us. But there is one Friend whose will is to save us, and I verily think He is stronger than they are."[1]

Thank God that God shall judge my soul, not man!
I marvel when they say,
"Think of that awful Day—
No pitying fellow-sinner's eyes shall scan
With tolerance thy soul,
But His who knows the whole,
The God whom all men own is wholly just."
Hold thou that last word dear,
And live untouched by fear.
He knows with what strange fires He mixed this dust.

[1] F. D. Maurice.

The heritage of race,
The circumstance and place
Which make us what we are—were from His hand,
That left us, faint of voice,
Small margin for a choice.
He gave, I took: shall I not fearless stand?
Hereditary bent
That hedges in intent
He knows, be sure, the God who shaped thy brain,
He loves the souls He made;
He knows His own hand laid
On each the mark of some ancestral stain.
Not souls severely white,
But groping for more light,
Are what Eternal Justice here demands.
Fear not; He made thee dust.
Cling to that sweet word—"Just."
All's well with thee if thou art in just hands.[1]

¶ It is on the doctrine of justification by faith alone that I delight to dwell when I am inclined to despond; I then throw myself without reserve at the feet of Christ. You, my dear Wood, understand me in what I say, and know very well that I am not pleading the cause of Antinomianism. Nothing is more easy than to reconcile St. Paul and St. James, when we understand the scheme of redemption as revealed in the Gospel. I only refer to that doctrine which is our greatest comfort and consolation when we are humbled and laid in the dust. It is not the only doctrine of Scripture, and therefore we shall miss the truth if we consider it without reference to others which limit and elucidate it; but it is the doctrine that gives life and health to the humble and lowly of heart.[2]

II.

The Condemnation.

"Who is he that shall condemn?"

Even if a charge is made, who will condemn? The Judge, of course. And who is the Judge? It is none but Christ. Will Christ Jesus condemn? Christ Jesus is the very person who has

[1] Anne Reeve Aldrich, *The Eternal Justice.*
[2] Dean Hook, *Life and Letters*, i. 224.

made condemnation impossible. He has died for that purpose. More than that, He has risen; He has even taken His seat at God's right hand; He also makes intercession for us.

The reasons which are given are four in number. They have been compared to the ropes which are used in mining operations. Every strand of these ropes is warranted to bear the weight of the entire tonnage which in their corded combination they are ever required to bear. That they will stand the utmost strain which may be put on them in use is thus absolutely sure. In like manner each of the grounds on which justification by God is said to rest is all-sufficient to sustain it. What should be said of them when viewed in their entire and perfect combination?

1. *Christ Jesus died.*—That He died is certain. Respecting the fact of Calvary there is no serious dispute. Infidelity has no foothold to assail it. But how came He to die? Death is the penalty of transgression. He must have been made under the law, of which it is the penalty. Was He a transgressor of it? No. Then how came He to die? "It is Christ that died." "It is Christ"—the Sent of God, to be the Saviour of the world, the Divinely commissioned and appointed Surety of sinners. "It is Christ that died"—"the just for the unjust"—to make atonement for their sins. There it is; His death was vicarious—in their stead; penal—the punishment of their sins; expiatory—magnifying the Divine law, satisfying the Divine justice on their behalf; their condemnation was fully borne in it; it left nothing for them to bear; in point of law it was as much their condemnation as it was His; and hence no legal claim remains to be made upon them and no judicial condemnation to be passed upon them; their absolution, justification, acquittal is, in short, a matter of common equity, of necessary justice. A debt cannot be paid twice over. The first settlement of the claim is its final settlement.

¶ Pearson gives three reasons for the death of Christ: (1) First, it was necessary, as to the *Prophetical* office, that Christ should die, to the end that the truth of all the doctrine which He delivered might be confirmed by His death. (2) Secondly, it was necessary that Christ should die, and by His death perform the *Sacerdotal* office. For Christ had no other sacrifice to offer for our sins than Himself. Therefore if He will offer sacrifice for sin, He

must of necessity die, and so make His soul an offering for sin. If Christ be our passover, He must be sacrificed for us. (3) Thirdly, there was a necessity that Christ should die, in reference to His *Regal* office. "O king, live for ever" is either the loyal or the flattering vote for temporal princes; either the expression of our temporal desires, or the suggestion of their own: whereas our Christ never showed more sovereign power than in His death, never obtained more than by His death.[1]

When shadows of the valley fall,
When sin and death the soul appal,
One light we through the darkness see—
Christ on the Cross,
We cry to Thee![2]

2. *Christ Jesus rose again.*—Regarded in its expiatory character, the death of Christ carried in it an all-satisfying virtue, a Divinely and therefore an infinitely satisfying virtue. All that the circumstances of the case required, all that law and justice demanded, was fully met in it. In this respect the argument of the text has quite enough to warrant it in the first strand of the rope by which it holds: "It is Christ that died." At the same time, this warrant might not have thus appeared to be all-decisive. If Christ had been detained among the dead, the thought might not unnaturally have arisen, Can it be that He has failed? Where is the evidence that the expiation of His atonement is Divinely satisfying? Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? For it is very great. The stone is rolled away. "He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." "It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again."

The resurrection of Christ has a twofold value. It is the pledge of victory and it is the manifestation of acceptance. He has conquered death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" But His resurrection is also His Father's testimony to the sufficiency of the atonement by the cross. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

[1] *Exposition of the Creed* (Camb. ed.), 409. [2] Tudor Jenks.

¶ By the resurrection, says Pearson, we are assured of the justification of our persons; and if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, it will be imputed to us for righteousness; for He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." By His death we know that He suffered for sin, by His resurrection we are assured that the sins for which He suffered were not His own. Had no man been a sinner, He had not died; had He been a sinner, He had not risen again; but, dying for those sins which we committed, He rose from the dead to show that He had made full satisfaction for them, that we believing in Him might obtain remission of our sins, and justification of our persons. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," and, raising up our Surety from the prison of the grave, did actually absolve, and apparently acquit, Him from the whole obligation to which He had bound Himself, and in discharging Him acknowledged full satisfaction made for us.[1]

¶ "Yea rather!" The emphasis is on these two words. "Yea." "It is Christ that died." Behold the expiation of all your guilt, the atonement for all your sins. "Rather." "It is Christ that is risen again." Behold the discharge of all your legal obligations, the authoritative receipt of all your debts as paid by Him in full. "Yea rather." Behold the two together, His death and His resurrection always both together. For in the same character and for the same purpose that He died, in the same character and for the same purpose was He raised.[2]

"He is dead," we cried, and even amid that gloom
The wintry veil was rent! The new-born day
Showed us the Angel seated in the tomb
And the stone rolled away.

It is the hour! We challenge heaven above
Now, to deny our slight ephemeral breath
Joy, anguish, and that everlasting love
Which triumphs over death.[3]

3. *Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God.*—He who was once despised and rejected of men now occupies the honourable position of a beloved and honoured Son. The right hand of God is (1) the place of majesty and favour. Our Lord Jesus is His people's representative. When He died for them, they had rest;

[1] *Exposition of the Creed*, 506.
[2] E. A. Thomson.
[3] Alfred Noyes, *Resurrection*.

when He rose again for them, they had liberty; when He sat down at His Father's right hand, they had favour, and honour, and dignity. The raising and elevation of Christ is the elevation, the acceptance, the enshrinement, the glorifying of all His people, for He is their head and representative. This sitting at the right hand of God, then, is to be viewed as the acceptance of the person of the Surety, the reception of the Representative, and, therefore, the acceptance of our souls. But the right hand is (2) the place of power. Christ at the right hand of God hath all power in heaven and in earth. Who shall fight against the people who have such power vested in their Captain? If Jesus is our all-prevailing King, and hath trodden our enemies beneath His feet; if sin, death, and hell are all vanquished by Him, and we are represented in Him, by no possibility can we be destroyed.

¶ Above the "Yea rather" there is an "Even," and such an "even"! It is omitted in the Revised Version; but there is good manuscript authority for its retention, and it deserves to be retained. "Who is even at the right hand of God." "Even"! Put the emphasis on "even." Once He was low indeed. Once He was in the grave. Now He is high indeed. Now He is on the throne even, "even at the right hand of God."[1]

¶ Sometimes we say, Can there be a stronger argument for non-condemnation than that which is taken from the death of Christ? And we are ready to conclude that there is not, and that there cannot be. But here we see that there is a stronger "Yea rather." And sometimes we say, But can there be a stronger argument for non-condemnation than that which is taken from the resurrection of Christ? And again we are ready to conclude that there is not, and that there cannot be. But here again we see that there is yet a stronger. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"; "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son?" To which of them does He say, "Sit thou at my right hand"? And what then? If Christ is thus at the right hand of God, in the very highest post of honour and of dignity in the heaven of heavens, for the purpose of righteous judgment, of universal judgment, shall He condemn those for whom He died?

¶ The profession of faith in Christ, as sitting on the right hand of God, is necessary: First, to mind us of our duty, which must needs consist in subjection and obedience. The majesty of

[1] E. A Thomson.

a king claimeth the loyalty of a subject; and if we acknowledge his authority we must submit unto his power. Nor can there be a greater incitation to obedience than the consideration of the nature of His government. Subject we must be, whether we will or no; but if willingly, then is our service perfect freedom; if unwillingly, then is our averseness everlasting misery. Enemies we all have been, under His feet we shall be, either adopted or subdued. A double kingdom there is of Christ: one of power, in which all are under Him; another of propriety, in those which belong unto Him: none of us can be excepted from the first; and happy are we if by our obedience we show ourselves to have an interest in the second, for then that kingdom is not only Christ's but ours. Secondly, it is necessary to believe in Christ sitting on the right hand of God, that we might be assured of an auspicious protection under His gracious dominion. For God by His exaltation hath given our Saviour "to be head over all things to the church"; and therefore from Him we may expect direction and preservation. There can be no illegality where Christ is the lawgiver; there can be no danger from hostility where the Son of God is the defender. The very name of "head" hath the signification not only of dominion but of union; and therefore while we look upon Him at the right hand of God, we see ourselves in heaven. This is the special promise which He hath made us since He sat down there: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." How should we rejoice, yea rather how should we fear and tremble, at so great an honour![1]

4. *Christ Jesus intercedes for us.*—This completes the argument. It crowns the climax. It is at the very top of the ladder.

¶ "Yea," "Rather," "Even," "Also." Put the emphasis upon Also, as after all as last of all. Are you not faithless, but believing? Then, if condemned at all, you must be condemned by Christ who is even at the right hand of God. God has there vested in Him as Lord and King the prerogative of judgment, and therefore of condemnation. Will He, your Advocate and Intercessor within the veil, condemn His own clients, for whom He died, and rose again, and ascended even to the right hand of God? Will He ignore, annul, His righteous advocacy, His meritorious intercession, by an adverse judgment, an unrighteous judgment? To do so would issue in the degradation of His office,

[1] *Exposition of the Creed*, 537.

the prostitution of His trust, the annihilation of His honour, the extinction of Himself.[1]

¶ As men have made the Death of Christ a sacrifice to the Divine wrath; the substitution of an innocent Victim for the guilty, as though God must have blood, and cared not whose—when they ought to have remembered how Scripture always tells of the love of God in giving, in not sparing, His own Son, but freely surrendering Him for us all—even so they have made the Intercession of Christ a perpetual coming between the Destroyer and His condemned, a constant pleading of that blood which alone appeased the anger, a daily and hourly standing between the Hand that would smite and the souls crouching beneath it. O terrible perversion of the sweet and blessed reality! "I and my Father are one" is as true of the Intercessor as it was true of the Sacrifice. Christ the Intercessor bears upon His heart in heaven all the sufferings and all the sins of mankind, not that He may restrain God from punishing, but that He may evermore apply to them that Divine love which first sent and gave Him. That is the Intercession. It is the bearing upon the soul of the Redeemer in His glory every distress and every peril and every temptation and every sin which may interfere with the realization of His salvation in even the humblest and most lost creature for whom He shed His precious blood. It is not the violent extorting for them from an unwilling God of an exemption from wrath; it is the representation of them, in their woes and weaknesses, before Him whose love for them is as strong and as prompt and as self-sacrificing as His own.[2]

(1) The intercession of Christ consists in His appearing in the presence of God for us, and presenting the memorials of His sufferings on our behalf. The Jewish high priest went of old on the Day of Atonement into the most holy place, to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy-seat. No human being was permitted to accompany him. The worshippers remained without; but bells of gold were placed upon the hem of his robe round about, that their sound might announce to them the safety of the high priest, and the acceptance of the sacrifice. Our great High Priest is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself. He is gone there, not with the blood of goats or of calves, but with His own blood. The fragrance of His sacrifice fills the land of glory; and the merits of His cross are mingled with all the

[1] E. A. Thomson. [2] C. J. Vaughan.

splendours of His throne. Not one pang which He suffered, and not one effort which He made for our salvation, can be forgotten. The traces of the blood of the Lamb are to be seen on every garment, and on every blessing there. And the Gospel which we hear is a joyful sound from the great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, announcing to us that His offering and sacrifice were to God of a sweet-smelling savour, and that because He lives, we shall live also.

(2) The intercession of Christ consists also in His declaring it to be His will that the blessings He has purchased should be bestowed on the objects of His mercy. He prays, "Lord, let it alone this year also," and the sentence on the barren fig-tree is suspended. He prays, "Father, forgive them," and the sins of the guilty are blotted out. He prays for the consolation of the good, and the Comforter descends to save the afflicted who lie low in grief. He prays for their protection, and the Almighty's hand is stretched down to shield the feeble and the defenceless. He prays for their sanctification, and the grace of God makes them perfect in every good work and word. He prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am," and the commandment is issued, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in."

(3) The intercession of Christ consists in His answering all the accusations which Satan advances against His people. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night; but no charge can he urge against them which their Advocate is not qualified to answer. Their imperfect services He is able to beautify, and there is expiation for their sins in His atoning blood. He is perfectly aware of all that Satan intends to advance. There are no unguarded moments with Him, in which He may be taken by surprise. The subtlety of their accuser cannot perplex their Advocate, nor his audacity confound Him, nor his pertinacity exhaust His patience.

(4) The intercession of Christ consists in His presenting the services of His people to the Father. "An angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." Their tears of penitence, their labours of faith and love, their songs of

gratitude, their gifts of charity, and their vows of obedience He lays before His Father, as purified by His gracious influence, and solicits for them His acceptance.

My Redeemer and my Lord,
I beseech thee, I entreat thee,
Guide me in each act and word,
That hereafter I may meet thee,
Watching, waiting, hoping, yearning,
With my lamp well trimmed and burning!
Interceding
With these bleeding
Wounds upon thy hands and side,
For all who have lived and erred
Thou hast suffered, thou hast died,
Scourged, and mocked, and crucified,
And in the grave hast thou been buried!

If my feeble prayer can reach thee,
O my Saviour, I beseech thee,
Even as thou hast died for me,
More sincerely
Let me follow where thou leadest,
Let me, bleeding as thou bleedest,
Die, if dying I may give
Life to one who asks to live,
And more nearly,
Dying thus, resemble thee.[1]

[1] Longfellow.

An Inseparable Love

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An Inseparable Love.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. viii. 38, 39.

1. We always think of this chapter as St. Paul's finest composition, and perhaps the most precious legacy which he bequeathed to the Church. It is a noble piece of literary work, full of choice language and deep philosophic thought. As a picture of the Christian life and its possessions and hopes, it reaches a sublime elevation which is nowhere else attained except in the lofty sayings of Jesus. And the best of it is kept to the last. The climax and peroration are where they ought to be. They form the grand Hallelujah Chorus which brings the oratorio to a close.

¶ A great French critic remarks upon St. Paul's indifference to style, the rough, rugged sentences of the Apostle, with their abrupt transitions, their lack of grace and finish, falling gratingly on the Frenchman's sensitive ear. And no reader of St. Paul's writings will challenge the truth of this criticism, for there is absolutely nothing of the conscious rhetorician about him; he is too intent upon pouring out his mind and heart, too eager to get into direct, living contact with men, to think of elegance of style. But, now and again, when he becomes impassioned, when in the progress of argument or exhortation some of the grander truths of life, or some of its vivifying hopes, come pressing upon him, then the preacher, the expounder, the controversialist, the counsellor, the pastor, becomes a seer. Brain and heart getting on fire, the thoughts that come, come molten, and fashion themselves naturally, without any need of art, into forms of beauty; and so we have his hymn to Charity, his ode to Immortality, and here his pæan to Love Divine.

2. These rapturous words are the climax of the Apostle's long demonstration that the Gospel is the revelation of "the

righteousness which is of God by faith," and is thereby "the power of God unto salvation." What a contrast there is between the beginning and the end of this argument! It started with sombre, sad words about man's sinfulness and aversion from the knowledge of God. It closes with this sunny outburst of triumph. Like some stream rising among black and barren cliffs, or melancholy moorlands, and foaming through narrow rifts in gloomy ravines, it reaches at last fertile lands, and flows calm, the sunlight dancing on its broad surface, till it loses itself at last in the unfathomable ocean of the love of God.

What we have before us is, first of all, love—a love which brings us into indissoluble union with God in Christ; it is called "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Next, we have a rapid list of the forces in the universe which might be conceived capable of separating us from that love. And then we have the persuasion which prevails above them all. The persuasion is mentioned first, but it may be taken last, as it closes the great argument.

I. A Love that will not let go.
II. Powers that are Powerless.
III. A Persuasion that Prevails.

I.

A Love that will not let go.

1. The Love of God.

"Who shall separate us from the love of God?"

1. "The love of God" may mean our love to God or God's love to us: which does St. Paul mean? He certainly means God's love to us: "Who shall separate us from the love of *God*?" In the argument of this Epistle the reality of God's love is confidently assumed. St. Paul was no shallow optimist, easily contented with the colour and glitter of the surface of things; he recognized as frankly and vividly as any pessimist can do the dark enigmas of nature and life; yet, notwithstanding this recognition, the fact of God's love is the fundamental article of his creed. What-

ever may perplex him, he never suspects that the cosmic trouble may arise in some defect of this love; in his conviction it is the primary, central truth of the universe.

Readers of Matthew Arnold will remember that in his essay on St. Paul he interprets our text as if the Apostle were exulting in his own love of God instead of God's love of him; exulting in a love proceeding from himself instead of a love which found him and carried him away with it. It shows almost as strange a lack of insight as does the same writer's conception of the God of Israel as an impersonal force. The secret of St. Paul's calm outlook and triumphant hope, the power that enabled him to rise above all evil and fear of evil was, most assuredly, not his own love of God, but God's love of him. The great saints of the Church have never thought much of their own love of God. It is His love of them and their fellows—a love greater than their hearts—that possessed them. "I think I am the poorest wretch that lives," said the dying Cromwell; "but I love God, or rather (correcting myself) I am loved of God."

I love; but ah! the whole
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee.
Lord Thou wert long beforehand with my soul,
Always Thou lovedst me.

¶ In his *Reminiscences of Frederick Denison Maurice* the late Mr. Haweis relates this incident: "I remember asking him one day, 'How are we to know when we have got hold of God? because sometimes we seem to have got a real hold of Him, whilst at other times we can realize nothing.' He looked at me with those eyes which so often seemed to be looking into an eternity beyond, whilst he said in his deep and tremulously earnest voice, 'You have not got hold of God, but He has got hold of you.'"

¶ Niagara stopped once! Owing to an ice dam thrown across the river the waters failed, the rainbow melted, the vast music was hushed. But there has been no moment in which the love of God has failed toward the rational universe, when its eternal music has been broken, or the rainbow has ceased to span the throne. There never will be such a moment. The crystal tide flows richly, and flows for ever.[1]

[1] W. L. Watkinson

Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold of Thee;
In this alone rejoice with awe,—
Thy mighty grasp of me.

Thy purpose of eternal good
Let me but surely know;
On this I'll lean, let changing mood
And feeling come and go:

Glad when Thy sunshine fills my soul,
Nor lorn when clouds o'ercast,
Since Thou within Thy sure control
Of love dost hold me fast.

2. But the love of God to us carries with it our love to God. Without a response to God's love how can we be persuaded of it? As God's love to us is rich and everlasting, surviving all variations of time and circumstance, we will respond to His love with a love as like His own as it is possible for the creature to give. Mutuality is of the essence of love. We have thinkers who recommend the substitution of nature for God. They assure us that when we properly know the universe we can regard it with awe and fear, with admiration and love. Nature is infinitely interesting, infinitely beautiful; there is food for contemplation which never runs short; it gives continually exquisite pleasure, and the arresting and absorbing spectacle, so fascinating by its variety, is at the same time overwhelming by its greatness and glory. But reciprocity is surely of the essence of love; and however we admire, love, and praise the creation, it cannot return our affection. We smile upon it, yet there is no answering flash; we extol it, but find no sympathetic response; appreciation passes into adoration, and still our worship is unrequited. We see the folly of falling in love with a statue, notwithstanding its beauty; and nature is that statue. "They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; neither speak they through their throat." In nature-worship, as in all idol-worship, mutuality is not possible; all thought and feeling, confidence and sacrifice are on one side. But with God in Christ fellowship becomes a fact. He declares His love to the

race most convincingly, and we love Him because He first loved us. He stretches forth His hand out of heaven, we clasp it; henceforth we are inseparable, no fortune or misfortune can unclench the grip. The love of the Eternal is one link of gold, our love to Him is another, and together they bind us to His throne for ever.

> For though "The love of God is broader than
> The measure of man's mind," yet all in vain
> The broad sun shines apace for him who hath
> No window to his house; and human love
> Must make an eastern outlook for the soul
> Ere it can see the dawn. He cannot dream
> Of oceans who hath never seen a pool.[1]

¶ Cynics speak scornfully of love; yet we may remember that it is the sublime element in our nature which most clearly reflects the Divine and Eternal. It sets at naught all the categories of time and sense, and identifies us with the infinite and timeless. It is indifferent to environment. It does not rise and fall with the fortune of the beloved, as the quicksilver in the glass responds to the weather; it is delightfully unconscious of secular vicissitude. It is unaffected by distance:

> Mountains rise and oceans roll
> To sever us in vain.

Duration does not weaken it. On receipt of his mother's portrait Cowper wrote: "It is fifty-two years since I saw her last, but I have never ceased to love her." Fifty-two centuries would not have chilled his affection. Death does not quench love. In Pompeii they showed me the bone of a human finger with the ring still upon it: fine symbol of the immortality of love and loyalty!

> Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
> Within his bending sickle's compass come;
> Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
> But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

ii. In Christ Jesus.

"Which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

1. St. Paul does not find the proof of God's love and the justification of ours in nature, history, or life. The love of God

[1] Anna Bunston, *The Porch of Paradise*, 8.

in creation is in eclipse, or at least in partial eclipse; and if we are to construe the Divine character from the facts of nature, we must hesitate and fear. The light is not clear, and thinkers are sorely puzzled. Here, then, comes in the mission of the Christian Church—to affirm the love of God in Christ Jesus to all mankind. The justification of an absolute confidence in God's unfailing love is found not in the sphere of nature, but in the sphere of redemption. The austere science of our day has put entirely out of court the rosy philosophy of the old deism. It annihilates sentiment; it will have none of it. If men are now to admire, reverence, and love God, they must find another basis than nature for their worship. There is none other except redemption; more than ever is the world shut up to that glorious fact. It is enough. Here the eternal love blazes out with irresistible demonstration. We cannot deny it, we cannot doubt it. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

¶ To-day two great schools of scientists seriously differ in their interpretation of the world. One holds that nature knows only force, selfishness, and violence; whilst the other, recognizing the large play of egotism and violence in the evolution of things, discerns that sympathy and sacrifice are prominent facts of the physical universe; the first denies love, the second acknowledges it. The contention between the philosophers will go on interminably, for really they are occupied with the diverse aspects of a paradoxical world, the moral of their controversy being that love is not absent in the creation, but revealed only partially, faintly, fitfully. In many creatures the evidences of love are conspicuous, in others there seems a denial of it. The delightful element is unmistakable in doves, butterflies, nightingales, and a thousand more lovely things; it is painfully lacking in hawks, sharks, crocodiles, rattlesnakes, and microbes. But men do not argue at noon whether the sun shines or not; and in the presence of Calvary there is an end of all strife touching the nature of God and the design of His government. Naturalism may doubt God's love, may deny it, but at the Cross we no longer guess and fear. He who died for us loves us, whatever enigmas may mock. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—the face marred more than any man's. What shall separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord?[1]

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

What is it to the circling hours,
The life they take or bring?
What is it to the winds and showers?
They know not anything.

But somehow, ere I am aware,
There comes a hush and thrill,
For all the sunshine and the air
A Presence seems to fill;

And from the sudden-opening sky,
A low Voice seems to say,
"I am the Resurrection, I
The Life, the Truth, the Way.

This Nature, which you idly blame,
Is but the robe I wear;
From Me the human spirit came,
And all its griefs I bear.

The smile whose light thou canst not see,
The grace that left thy side,
Though vanished from the earth, with Me
For ever they abide."

With Him I cannot be at strife;
Then will I kneel and say,
"In love He gave me that sweet life,
In love He took away.

And love's unfailing life, in Him,
Outlasts this arching sky;
For worlds may waste and suns grow dim,
But love can never die."

2. God's love is illimitable, all-pervasive, eternal; yes, but it is a love which has a channel and a course; love which has a method and a process by which it pours itself over the world. It is not, as some representations would make it, a vague, half-nebulous light diffused through space as in a chaotic, half-made universe; but all is gathered in that great Light which rules the day—even in Him who said: "I am the Light of the World." In Christ the love of God is all centred and embodied, that it

may be imparted to all sinful and hungry hearts, even as burning coals are gathered on a hearth that they may give warmth to all who are in the house.

The love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord is the heart of the Christian Gospel. It was what won the world at the beginning to the Christian obedience, and it is what holds the world now and will hold it as long as there are sins to be forgiven and hearts hungering for reconciliation with God. It is independent of much knowledge which may be discredited, and of much opinion which may become a fashion of the past. Whatever else which passes for Christianity and is supposed in some way to uphold it may decrease and disappear, this will increase and rise with purer and greater brightness upon the world. Every one of our intellectual conceptions of the mystery of the Godhead, of the Incarnation and the Atonement, may undergo a change, but the love which spoke, and acted, and lived in Jesus Christ will always touch the human heart with the deepest conviction and assurance of the love of God, and be the revelation and symbol of the Divine disposition towards the children of men.

¶ Ideas and ideals do not manifest the love of God to men —only what God has done shows that.[1]

3. If we would know God and love Him, we must find Him in Christ, in that Perfect Man—so strong and yet so gentle, so true, yet so tender—who moves before us in the Gospels. Is it difficult to love *Him*? It is not difficult to admire and praise Him. There is hardly a man in Christendom who does not do that. Even those who reject His claim to be one with the Father, even those who hold the Gospel to be but a late and imperfect tradition overlaid with many incredible fables, even those whose keen eyes detect flaws in His character and teaching —even these admit that no man ever lived or spake like Him, that He is beyond all rivalry, the wisest and best of the sons of men. It is easy, then, to admire and praise Christ; but to *love* Him is not so easy; for that takes faith.

¶ "God *so* loved the world"—not merely *so much*, but in *such a fashion*—"that"—that what? Many people would leap at once from the first to the last clause of the verse, and regard eternal life for all and sundry as the only adequate expression of

[1] *Life of Principal Rainy*, ii. 137.

the universal love of God. Not so does Christ speak. Between that universal love and its ultimate purpose and desire for every man He inserts two conditions, one on God's part, one on man's God's love reaches its end, namely, the bestowal of eternal life, by means of a Divine act and a human response. "God *so* loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So all the universal love of God for you and me and for all our brethren is "in Christ Jesus our Lord," and faith in Him unites us to it by bonds which no foe can break, no shock of change can snap, no time can rot, no distance can stretch to breaking.[1]

4. As we look at the love of God in Christ what do we find to be its most striking characteristics?

(1) *It was a universal love*, including all, even the most unworthy, in its embrace. It was not arrested by the prejudices of His time, nor did it even acknowledge their presence. It was not obsequious to the Pharisees, and cold or suspicious to the publicans. None of the numerous parties which were then struggling for ascendancy in Judea established the slightest preference to His regard. None could allege that by His partiality for others He displayed a proportionate indifference to them. Even that deep and almost impassable gulf between Gentile and Jew closed up before Him. In Him love placed itself at the disposal of every man without being deterred even by his sin. Indeed, the greater the sin the more earnestly it strove for a hearing. But its purpose was always the same—to save us from what it knew to be our deadliest foe, and to win us to the cause of holiness and truth. And it never despaired even of the most abandoned, or allowed him to go on to destruction because it was impotent to help him.

(2) Another characteristic of the love of God in Christ is that *it issued in the most perfect act of self-sacrifice.* It is often said that love sets no limits to itself, and this is true. It is the complete negation of selfishness. When it works it imposes no restraints upon its efforts, for their cessation would mean its own cessation also. When it forgives it forgives till seventy times seven, and then starts afresh. When it suffers there is no point at which it stops and refuses to go further, for that would be to acknowledge

[1] A. Maclaren.

its own exhaustion. Now, in Christ Jesus we see this love as it never had been seen on earth before. In Him it shrank from no labour or humiliation. It carried Him from the cradle to the cross without ever pausing or hesitating on the way. He left nothing undone which might accomplish its purpose, and when the supreme act of obedience was demanded He did not shrink. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Among His last words was a prayer for His murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." So "he loved us and gave himself for us." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

(3) Another characteristic of the love of God in Christ is that *it invests us with all it has.* It not only spares nothing in effecting our salvation from sin, but it enriches us with its whole possession. It is too frequently conceived as having exhausted itself in the great act of atonement, so that no surplus survives for further use, or as though it had then completed its work and remains henceforth in a state of quiescence. But Christ gave Himself *for* us that He might be able to give Himself *to* us—always the last ambition of love, short of which it never rests. Hence He prayed for His disciples: that the love wherewith His Father loved Him might be in them, and He in them. And St. Paul prays that our knowledge of the love of Christ may lead to our being "filled with all the fulness of God."

(4) And, lastly, it follows from all this that the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord is a love which *clings inseparably to its object.* Whoever gives himself wholly to another with a perfect knowledge and understanding of what he is, can have no conceivable reason for finally renouncing him. Nothing in his own nature can urge him to do so, for this is precluded by the very fact of his self-surrender; and nothing in the person for whom that surrender has been made, for that has already been considered and overcome. So it is with the love of Christ. If it had stopped at any point short of a complete sacrifice of Himself, then it might, so to speak, have retraced its steps. It would not have been irretrievably committed. But Christ has committed Himself. He is pledged to go the whole length which our complete salvation requires. So that there can be nothing in

Him which at any moment can move Him to let us go. He has left Himself no place of repentance.

¶ Passing the prison of one of our large cities early in the morning, I once saw what seemed to be a mother in a humble cart from a distant village, waiting at the entrance, for the release, perhaps of her son, that day from his term of bondage. There were the vacant seat beside her, the little basket of dainty food, the change of outer garments, and her tearful, eager glances at the door, all telling, very affectingly, to how much love the prisoner was about to be liberated, and how readily he would be transported to his far-off home. There was only a step for him from exile and shame to the parent's resources, the parent's dwelling, the parent's arms, the parent's joy—all these anxiously waiting for the moment of his discharge.[1]

A poor lad once, and a lad so trim—
A poor lad once, and a lad so trim,
Gave his love to her that loved not him.

"And," says she, "fetch me to-night, you rogue,
Your mother's heart to feed my dog!"
To his mother's house went that young man—

To his mother's house went that young man,
Killed her, and took the heart and ran,
And as he was running, look you, he fell—

And as he was running, look you, he fell.
And the heart rolled on the ground as well.
And the lad as the heart was a-rolling heard—

And the lad as the heart was a-rolling heard
That the heart was speaking, and this was the word:
The heart was weeping and crying so small—

The heart was weeping and crying so small,
"Are you hurt, my child, are you hurt at all?"[2]

II.

Powers that are Powerless.

"Who" or "What," demands the Apostle, "shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And in his reply he gives us two

[1] Charles New. [2] Jean Richepin, *A Mother's Heart.*

catalogues of the various powers and influences which we fear as likely to weaken or to alienate our love from Him in whose love we live. In his first catalogue he enumerates "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword"; in his second catalogue he enumerates "death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present and things to come, height and depth." As we follow and consider his words, the first catalogue presents no difficulty to our thoughts; we feel, we acknowledge, that the rigours of pain, want, hunger, danger have often strangled love; we forbode that, were we long exposed to them, our love might die. But the second catalogue is more difficult. We ask, for instance, How should "height" or "depth"; or, again, How should "angels" separate us from the love of Christ? And it is not until we perceive that St. Paul is indulging in one of those passionate and rhetorical outbursts which are characteristic of his style that his words shoot into light. But then, when we seize this clue and follow it, we understand that, in the rapture and exaltation of his spirit, he defies all heaven and earth to extinguish, or even to lessen, his love for Christ, or Christ's love for him; the very "angels and principalities" of heaven, supposing them capable of the endeavour, could not shake him from his rest; nor all the "powers" of hell—no vicissitudes of time, whether "present" or "to come"; nor aught within the bounds, the "heights and depths," of space. Strong in the love of Christ, he is more than conqueror over them all.

¶ Observe the difference in order between the Authorized and Revised Versions. There is overwhelming manuscript authority for placing "powers" after "things to come." We naturally expect them to be associated with "principalities," as in 1 Cor. xv. 24; Eph. i. 21. It is possible that in one of the earliest copies the word may have been accidentally omitted, and then added in the margin and reinserted at the wrong place. But it is perhaps more probable that in the rush of impassioned thought St. Paul inserts the words as they come, and that thus "nor powers" may be slightly belated. When not critically controlled, the order of association is a very subtle thing.[1]

The possible enemies may be taken in four groups—(1)

[1] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, 223.

those of our own Experience, gathered under the two comprehensive words death and life; (2) those of the world of Spirits, called angels, principalities, powers; (3) those of Time, "things present and things to come"; and (4) those of Space, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation."

i. Our own Experience.

"Neither death, nor life."

1. Death! What a crude fact it is, driving its iron wedge into the limits of this strange, mysterious life of ours; and the whole question of immortality comes quivering up into consciousness with such a sentence as this. Death, that seems to end things, but leaves us so far apart from our beloved! Shall death end thought also, and shall the dream that has been so fair—that beyond the world there lived a Heart that cared for us—vanish into thick darkness and leave us utterly alone? Death shall not separate us from the love of God; death is but a moment in life, an incident in a soul's career; and if God has loved us once He will love us for evermore, and on beyond the boundaries of the world God's love waits to be gracious. Death need make no man afraid who has believed in the love of God.

¶ That men fear death, as likely to separate them from the love of God, to impair their union with Him, or, perchance, to put them beyond His reach, is beyond a doubt. There is nothing that most men fear so much as death; nothing, alas, that most Christians fear so much. We have an instinctive and natural dread of it, which even faith finds it hard to conquer, and to which our imperfect faith often lends an additional force. It is not only the darkness and decay of the tomb that we dread; it is also the judgment which lies beyond the tomb. It is not only that we are loth to part with those whom we love; we also fear, lest, in the pangs of death, we should relax the grasp of faith. And, hence, in the Service for the Dead, we use a prayer than which few are more pathetic: "O Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, *suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee.*" A most pathetic, and yet, as we often mean it, a most un-Christian prayer! For what we too commonly imply by it is that if, amid the pangs of dissolution and the darkness of death, we should cease to see God by faith and to put our trust in Him, He will forsake us; that if,

oppressed by mortal weakness, we loosen our hold upon Him, He will let us fall; that at the very crisis, and in the very circumstance, in which an earthly friend would strengthen his comforting grasp on us, our heavenly Friend will relax His grasp and let us drop into the darkness which waits to devour us up! Whereas Christ has taught us that God's help is nearest when we most need His help, that He perfects His strength in our weakness, that our redemption from all evil depends, not on our fluctuating sense of His Presence, or on our imperfect love for Him, but on His being with us although we know it not, and His eternal unbounded love for us.[1]

2. It is a great thing to be persuaded that this power we call death, which has been so feared and fought against, cannot sever the ties which unite us to God. It seems to separate the children of men from so much. Every day we see it in its own ancient and awful way invading human homes, breaking up circles of friendship, and laying its touch upon the dearest attachments. But let us not make too much of the isolating power of death even from this point of view. There is a love between soul and soul which death cannot destroy—a love that loves on though the outward presence has vanished, and is often conscious of even a closer communion than when each could only half express itself through the poor medium of the body. Death means invisibility, but not the loss or destruction of love; not separation, perhaps not even distance. And how much more must it be true of God that death cannot divide us from Him, cannot pluck us out of His hands, cannot crush us out of existence? To be loved by God is to be preserved and cherished. We are His children, therefore we must live on with Him and be cared for by Him.

¶ To God death and the hereafter are not the mysteries and barriers they are to us. Those who die to us live to Him. They are in His care wherever they are. They have not passed from His sight because they have passed from our sight—gone beyond the range of our eye and ear. The mere passage from the seen to the unseen cannot touch His influence, His love to them, His power to help them and to hold communion with them. Death can have no manner of dominion over the Love that gave us their love, and gave it, not that it might perish, but for everlasting life.[2]

[1] Samuel Cox. [2] J. Hunter.

I thought the road would be hard and bare,
But lo! flowers,
Springing flowers,
Bright flowers blossoming everywhere!

The night, I feared, would be dark and drear,
But lo! stars,
Golden stars,
Glorious, glowing stars are here!

And my shrinking heart, set free from dread,
Sees Love
(Lo! it is Love.)
God's love crowning with Death my head![1]

¶ It happened in 1901—if I may introduce a personal illustration—that my only child fell ill, and for a time, as it seemed, dangerously ill. One day she fell into a troubled sleep, in which it was evident that her dreams were disquiet. She tossed about and cried aloud. Her mother bent over her, touched her, and she awoke. The eyes of the little sufferer opened. She looked up at her mother's face, and oh! what a change passed over her own; and she said, "Oh, mother dear, I have been dreaming such dreadful things. I dreamt that I was far away in a dark place, and that I called and called and you could not hear, and did not answer. And then you touched me, and I opened my eyes, and there you were." The language of the child reminded me of the language of a saint, one of the greatest that ever lived, in a prayer addressed to the King of kings and Lord of lords: "We sleep, O our Father, on Thy tender and paternal bosom, and in our sleep we sometimes dream that all is wrong, only to wake and find that all is right."[2]

¶ The truest and tenderest earthly love says to its beloved, what is said on Charles Kingsley's tombstone in Eversley Churchyard: *Amavimus, amamus, amabimus.*

Even for the dead I will not bind
My soul to grief; death cannot long divide,
For is it not as if the rose that climbed
My garden-wall had bloomed the other side?

3. *Nor life.*—We know death—that black cloud which is ever travelling towards us across the waste and will presently touch

[1] Margaret Blaikie, *Songs by the Way*, 56. [2] R. J. Campbell.

us with its cold shadow. St. Paul bids it come. Ay, and life too. His defiance rises from death to life; for life, did we but realize it, is a worse enemy than death—more perilous, more mysterious, more awful.

> Many there be that seek Thy face
> To meet the hour of parting breath;
> But 'tis for life I need Thy grace:
> Life is more solemn still than death.

What dread chances it holds! what appalling chances of disaster, of suffering, of shame! Who can forecast what may be on the morrow? Perhaps poverty, or disease, or insanity, or—worse than all—disgrace. Many a man has succumbed to a sudden temptation, and, in one passionate moment, has defamed the honour of his blameless years. Surely life is more terrible than death, and it is nothing less than a deliverance and a triumph when a wayfarer arrives at his journey's end and is laid to rest without reproach.

> Out of the sleep of earth, with visions rife
> I woke in death's clear morning, full of life:
> And said to God, whose smile made all things bright,
> "That was an awful dream I had last night."

4. Not a few honest and devout souls in these days are compelled by their experience to interpret "life" in our text as including intellectual perplexities and doubts, suspensions of judgment on important matters of faith, uncertainties, even positive disbelief in things once surely believed among us. Growing knowledge in many directions, physical discovery, the advance of philosophical thought, the new study of comparative religion, the more purely critical study and interpretation of our sacred religious literature—these and other causes are operating to unsettle and change traditional ways of thinking about many things and to make ancient symbols fade and fail. Let us not be anxious or fearful. The mind must obey its laws; and to feel and obey the sacred claims of truth is to love God with the mind. The truth of things is also the thought of God in things.

(1) Realizing the love of God in Jesus Christ, we more than triumph over *all the mystery of life*. The natural tendency of the painful things of human life is to induce a depressed mood, to

render us sceptical towards the greatest truths. Many are not affected by the dark aspects of nature and history: they give these no place in their thought; they never brood over them, wondering what they mean; thoughtless and shallow, they eat and drink and sleep. It is very different with others. They cannot rest because of the suffering and sorrow of the world, and the natural action of such brooding is to work havoc in the soul. Reason fails to solve the cruel problems; then scepticism sets in, and despair by scepticism. But so long as I can say "He loved me and gave himself for me," I am immune from the baneful power of mystery and intellectual bewilderment: the darkness emphasized by science and felt by us all cannot blind and destroy me. He who has saved me from death in His own death will one day clear up these painful puzzles; they are incidental and temporary. Love in the heart means light in the eye. Believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things, I keep my hold on the eternal truths which ensure eternal life.

¶ In the sunless deeps are animals with eyes of extraordinary size. And the marvellous thing is that these particular creatures have in a high degree the power of manufacturing their own light, and the economizing of the delicate phosphorescence has developed in them eyes of remarkable magnitude and power. With their self-created luminousness these abyssal fish withstand the blackness of their environment, and indirectly the darkness has secured for them eyes far more splendid than those of their shallow-water relatives. Thus is it in the abyss in which we live, and which proves to so many a gulf of dark despair. There are thousands of noble men and women with splendid eyes. They see God as clearly as any angel in heaven can see Him; they behold His government over them causing all things to work together for their good; they view the golden consummation to which the universe tends. The very darkness that presses upon them has taught them the secret of making light in themselves, and it has developed in them a power of vision that pierces to the heart of things.[1]

¶ What, then, is to be done in this rickety, crazy world, so mad, so tumultuous, so vexatious in its moral mysteries? This brings us right away to Bethlehem, to Calvary, to the Christ. I grow in the conviction that nothing can reconcile all mysteries and contradictions, and illuminate all perplexing darkness, but

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

the light which streams from the priesthood of Him whom I worship as God the Son. He keeps the world alive; inquire more deeply into that suggestion, and find how large and true it is. Christ is the life of the world and the light of the world, and though He be statistically outnumbered, He is influentially supreme.[1]

O Thou, in all Thy might so far,
  In all Thy love so near,
Beyond the range of sun and star,
  And yet beside us here,—

What heart can comprehend Thy name,
  Or, searching, find Thee out,
Who art within, a quickening Flame,
  A Presence round about?

Yet though I know Thee but in part,
  I ask not, Lord, for more;
Enough for me to know Thou art,
  To love Thee and adore.

O sweeter than aught else besides,
  The tender mystery
That like a veil of shadow hides
  The Light I may not see!

And dearer than all things I know
  Is childlike faith to me,
That makes the darkest way I go
  An open path to Thee.[2]

(2) In the consciousness of the Divine love we more than triumph over *all the suffering of life.* The sorrow of life does not harm. Conquerors are often much the worse for the battle. A victorious fleet is a shattered fleet, often scarcely able to find a spar on which to hang the flag of victory; a triumphant army is a stricken host that moves spectators to tears; a conquering athlete is a ghastly sight. But the Apostle intimates that this stern fight unto death shall inflict upon us no serious and abiding wound. If we could for a moment transcend carnal limits and peep into glory, we should see that our glorified ancestry are not one whit the worse for their life of hardship and martyrdom.

[1] Joseph Parker, *Well Begun*, 169. [2] Frederick Lucian Hosmer.

They suffered great tribulation, but they have survived all without a scar.

¶ Not long ago I visited a flower-show, and, following the crowd, found myself amid a delightful host of orchids. It is needless to say what wonderful shapes and colours were displayed; masters of language need the wealth of poetry to describe the grace and magnificence which they unfold; they epitomize the perfection of the world. They are strangely privileged plants, gorgeous children of the sun, and they show what can be done under blue skies in depths of safety, in balmy air, with brilliant light. But before leaving the exhibition I wandered into another department, where the Alpine plants were being exhibited. Not expecting much this time, I was surprised and delighted by triumphs of form and colour. They did not suffer in comparison with the tropical blooms. Delicate, curiously beautiful, inexpressibly elegant, vivid in colour, of manifold dyes, perfumed with subtle scents of sweetness, they charmed and dazzled eyes that had just been satiated by the butterfly colours of Eastern beauties. And the Alpine gems owed all that they were to what they had suffered. Their sparkle is the gleam of the ice-age; their whiteness that of the eternal snows on whose border they sprang; they caught their royal blue whilst dizzy peaks thrust them into the awful sky; they are so firm because the rock on which they grew has got into them; they are so sensitive because they trembled so long on the precipice. They are the children of night and winter, the nurslings of blizzards; cataracts, glaciers, and avalanches perfected their beauty. In a vast, savage, elemental war they won the glory which makes them worthy to stand by the picked blooms painted by all the art of perpetual summer. Thus the sanctified sternness of human life blossoms in great, pure, beautiful souls which adorn heaven itself.[1]

Thou hast visited me with Thy storms,
And the vials of Thy sore displeasure
Thou hast poured on my head, like a bitter draught
Poured forth without stint or measure;
Thou hast bruised me as flax is bruised;
Made me clay in the potter's wheel;
Thou has hardened Thy face like steel,
And cast down my soul to the ground;
Burnt my life in the furnace of fire, like dross,
And left me in prison where souls are bound:
Yet my gain is more than my loss.

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

What if Thou hadst led my soul
To the pastures where dull souls feed;
And set my steps in smooth paths, far away
From the rocks where men struggle and bleed;
Penned me in low, fat plains,
Where the air is as still as death,
And Thy great winds are sunk to a breath,
And Thy torrents a crawling stream,
And the thick steam of wealth goes up day and night,
Till Thy sun gives a veilèd light,
And heaven shows like a vanished dream!

What if Thou hadst set my feet
With the rich in a gilded room;
And made me to sit where the scorners sit,
Scoffing at death and doom!
What if I had hardened my heart
With dark counsels line upon line;
And blunted my soul with meat and with wine,
Till my ears had grown deaf to the bitter cry
Of the halt and the weak and the impotent;
Nor hearkened, lapt in a dull content,
To the groanings of those who die!

My being had waxed dull and dead
With the lusts of a gross desire;
But now Thou hast purged me throughly, and burnt
My shame with a living fire.
So burn me, and purge my will
Till no vestige of self remain,
And I stand out renewed without spot or stain.
Then let Thy flaming angel at last
Smite from me all that has been before;
And sink me, freed from the load of the past,
In Thy dark depths evermore.[1]

ii. The World of Spirits.

"Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers."

"Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers;" this is a Jewish phrase for the spiritual hierarchy. The modern equivalent is the unseen forces which encompass us, those mysterious powers and operations which act upon our lives, and compel them to

[1] Sir Lewis Morris, *From the Desert.*

unthought-of issues. They lie without us, mysterious, incalculable, uncontrollable, invading us unexpectedly, shaping our experience, and determining our destiny. We never know what they will be doing with us.

This second set of enemies is still more mysterious and strong. The experiences of this world shall not separate us, but what is there beyond this world? What is that unseen which lingers near us and sometimes almost breaks through into sight—angels, principalities, and powers? There have been different views of what this means.

(1) It is important, says Maclaren, to observe that this expression, when used without any qualifying adjective, seems uniformly to mean good angels, the hierarchy of blessed spirits before the throne. So that there is no reference to "spiritual wickedness in high places" striving to draw men away from God. The supposition which the Apostle makes is, indeed, an impossible one—that these ministering spirits, who are sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation, should so forget their mission and contradict their nature as to seek to bar us out from the love which it is their chiefest joy to bring to us. St. Paul knows it to be an impossible supposition, and its very impossibility gives energy to his conclusion, just as when in the same fashion he makes the other equally impossible supposition about an angel from heaven preaching another gospel than that which he had preached to them.

(2) On the other hand, Kelman says: If we study the thought of St. Paul's day we shall find a very orderly and detailed system of demonology, in which they conceived a brood of evil spirits who tempt the souls of men. There are those who still hold that view, and there are those who take other views of such matters. You may call it that, or you may call it nerves, or you may call it any name you please; the difficulty is not in what you call it, but in what you find it to be in your daily experience. And whatever may be the ultimate explanation of these things, this remains true, that some day we waken with our whole heart set upon doing the will of God and pleasing Him, and before the day is half-done some power from without or from within in this strange mechanism of body and spirit in which we live, some power like a great evil hand, has laid hold upon our life and

broken it across, and everything has gone wrong with us, and we try in vain to right it. The day is handed over to the powers of darkness. And if there is anything in our experience which makes it difficult to remember and believe in the love of God, it is just such a thing as this. In any sort of bitterness, so long as it be a smooth-flowing experience, we can continue to believe; but when this sort of thing happens, God has gone from heaven, and all things are left the sport of evil power. But we are in His universe, and these are but the hounds of God that He holds in the leash in His hand and will not let too far upon the souls He loves. That also is part of the great love of God, and His love has not been defeated by angels, or principalities, or powers. He loves us still through the worst day of it all.

Lord, whomsoever Thou shalt send to me,
Let that same be
Mine Angel predilect;
Veiled or unveiled, benignant or austere,
Aloof or near;
Thine, therefore mine, elect.

So may my soul nurse patience day by day,
Watch on and pray
Obedient and at peace;
Living a lonely life in hope, in faith;
Loving till death,
When life, not love, shall cease.

. . . Lo, thou mine Angel with transfigured face
Brimful of grace,
Brimful of love for me!
Did I misdoubt thee all that weary while,
Thee with a smile
For me as I for thee?[1]

iii. Time.

"Nor things present, nor things to come."

1. "Nor things present, nor things to come" is the Apostle's next class of powers impotent to disunite us from the love of God. The rhythmical arrangement of the text deserves to be noticed,

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

not only as bearing on its music and rhetorical flow, but as affecting its force. We have first a pair of opposites, and then a triplet: "death, nor life"; "angels, nor principalities, nor powers." We have again a pair of opposites: "things present, nor things to come"; again followed by a triplet: "height, nor depth, nor any other creature." The effect of this is to divide the whole into two, and to throw the first and second classes more closely together, as also the third and fourth. Time and Space, these two mysterious ideas, which work so fatally on all human love, are powerless here.

2. Men believe in the gay dawning of youth, and in the brilliant days when all things are fair, and the longest day is never too long, nor the hardest work too hard, and all things appear in the charm of life in which we began it. But how much disillusion comes, and the grey skies succeed the blue, and hopes do not fulfil themselves, and life is not what it seemed to promise! Then shall we have to give the venture up at the last, clinging to spar after spar of our wrecked ship, until at last it is altogether water-logged and sinks, and we are like to perish. When will the day come that the love of God also will die out, and we shall be left loveless in this ghastly universe? That day will never come.

> Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race,
> Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,
> Whose speed is but the heavy Plummet's pace;
> And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
> Which is no more than what is false and vain,
> And merely mortal dross;
> So little is our loss,
> So little is thy gain.
> For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,
> And last of all, thy greedy self consumed,
> Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
> With an individual kiss;
> And Joy shall overtake us as a flood:
> When every thing that is sincerely good
> And perfectly divine,
> With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
> About the supreme Throne
> Of Him, t'whose happy-making sight alone,

When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this Earthy grossness quit,
Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death and Chance, and thee O Time.[1]

¶ The great Revelation of God, on which the whole of Judaism was built, was that made to Moses of the name "I AM THAT I AM." And parallel to the verbal revelation was that symbol of the Bush, burning and unconsumed, which is so often misunderstood. It appears wholly contrary to the usage of Scriptural visions, which are ever wont to express in material form the same truth which accompanies them in words, that the meaning of that vision should be, as it is frequently taken as being, the continuance of Israel, unharmed by the fiery furnace of persecution. Not the continuance of Israel, but the eternity of Israel's God is the teaching of that flaming wonder. The Burning Bush and the Name of the Lord proclaimed the same great truth of self-derived, self-determined, timeless, undecaying Being. And what better symbol than the bush burning, and yet not burning out, could be found of that God in whose life there is no tendency to death, whose work digs no pit of weariness into which it falls, who gives and is none the poorer, who fears no exhaustion in His spending, no extinction in His continual shining? And this eternity of Being is no mere metaphysical abstraction. It is eternity of love, for God is love. That great stream, the pouring out of His own very inmost Being, knows no pause; nor does the deep fountain from which it flows ever sink one hair's-breadth in its pure basin.[2]

iv. Space.

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature."

1. While our Revisers had the courage of their scholarship in dealing with verses 19–21, that courage seems to have failed them in dealing with this 39th verse, where the same Greek word is used, and where therefore it should, by their own rule, be rendered by the same English word. Instead of putting "nor any other *creation*" into the text, they have banished the word "creation" into the margin, and retained the word "creature" in the text, although every one must admit that between a single creature and a whole creation there is a considerable, even an enormous, difference.

There may yet, says the Apostle, be some fresh transforma-

[1] Milton. [2] A. Maclaren.

tions. I know not what new environment may yet confront me, what strange world, what undreamed-of surroundings, what play of forces more dread and solemn than I have hitherto experienced; but I fear not even that. For there is nothing here, nothing there, nothing anywhere about which I need to fret or trouble; because, wherever I may be and whatever may happen, I shall have the love of God for my comrade and my portion.

2. As the former clause proclaimed the powerlessness of Time, so this proclaims the powerlessness of that other great mystery of creatural life which we call Space. Height or depth, it matters not. That diffusive love diffuses itself equally in all directions. Up or down, it is all the same. The distance from the centre is equal to zenith or to nadir. Here we have the same process applied to that idea of Omnipresence as was applied in the former clause to the idea of Eternity. That thought, so hard to grasp with vividness, and not altogether a glad one to a sinful soul, is all softened and glorified, as some solemn Alpine cliff of bare rock is when the tender morning light glows on it, when it is thought of as the Omnipresence of Love. "Thou God seest me" may be a stern word, if the God who sees be but a mighty Maker or a righteous Judge. As reasonably might we expect a prisoner in his solitary cell to be glad when he thinks that the jailer's eye is on him from some unseen spy-hole in the wall as expect any thought of God but one to make a man read that grand 139th Psalm with joy: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there." So may a man say shudderingly to himself, and tremble as he asks in vain, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" But how different it all is when we can cast over the marble whiteness of that solemn thought the warm hue of life, and change the form of our words into this of our text: "Nor height, nor depth, shall be able to separate us from the love of God."

Love which, on earth, amid all the shows of it,
  Has ever been seen the sole good of life in it,
The love, ever growing there, spite of the strife in it,
  Shall arise, made perfect, from death's repose of it.
And I shall behold Thee, face to face,
O God, and in Thy light retrace

How in all I loved here, still wast Thou!
Whom pressing to, then, as I fain would now,
I shall find as able to satiate
  The love, Thy gift, as my spirit's wonder
Thou art able to quicken and sublimate
  With this sky of Thine, that I now walk under,
And glory in Thee for, as I gaze
Thus, thus! Oh, let men keep their ways
Of seeking Thee in a narrow shrine—
Be this my way! And this *is* mine![1]

III.

A Persuasion that Prevails.

"I am persuaded."

1. "I am persuaded," says the Apostle, and this is one of his great phrases. Wherever it occurs, it expresses, not merely an assured faith, a strong conviction, but a faith in something which is not obvious or indisputable, and a conviction which has been reached after many a doubt and many a struggle, after much questioning and long groping in the darkness. The Apostle has had to feel his way through the tangle out into the open. And thus, when he says "I am persuaded," he is proclaiming a conviction which has satisfied his deepest need.

The assurance came to him, as it comes to every man who makes the glad discovery, out of his experience. He looked back along the road which he had travelled blindly, with bleeding feet and a troubled heart, and he saw that an unseen hand had been guiding him and shaping his lot and making all things work together for his good. And thus he was "persuaded." This is the surest, if indeed it is not the only, evidence of God. It is not the teleological or ontological argument that has compelled my faith. No, it is this—that I have found God in my life, and have seen there the operation of His grace and goodness, His wisdom and strength. I recognize, as I look back, that, when I thought I was wandering alone in the darkness, He was leading me all the time, and the experiences which were so painful and distressing at the moment have proved the most precious of all and have brought me enlargement and enrichment.

[1] Browning, *Christmas Eve.*

2. It is a great thing to be able to use such words as these with regard to the supreme verities. It is like having one's house built upon a rock instead of upon the shifting sand. It is like having one's course clearly marked upon the chart, and one's rudder and compass in perfect order, as compared with the man who has neither chart nor compass, and simply drifts. This explains why, on the scientific side of life, men in this age are so strong, and on the religious side so weak; they are sure of their science; they are not sure, or at least not so sure, of their religion. Agnostics, that is what so many call themselves to-day—not atheists, not infidels. Few say there is no God. What they say is, "We do not know"; and the uncertainty paralyses religious action. "I am persuaded," wrote the Apostle, and, being persuaded himself, he has persuaded millions more; for your convinced men, the men certain of their ground, the men who can ring out, "It is so," "I know," "I do verily believe"—these are the strong men, the men who do most work, the men of widest, most potent influence. For the *masses* are always attracted by confidence, and will embrace the wildest superstition, embark on the most Quixotic enterprise, if one who has absolute faith in his cause leads the way; while what is in itself an unquestionable truth will hardly touch them if it is advanced with hesitancy or faltering. It is the men who, like St. Paul, can say, "I am persuaded," "I know whom I have believed," or, like Luther, "Ich kann nicht anders," "I cannot do otherwise," that move the world; for if doubt is contagious, thank God faith is contagious too.

¶ It is still the evident and immediate duty of many people living in Christian lands to set themselves at once to know God as He has been revealed to the world by Jesus Christ. To know Him is to have an untroubled and unlimited confidence in Him, and their want of confidence shows that they do not know Him. Right knowledge of God is everything for strength and peace. It is told of one of our Scottish martyrs, that, looking up to the hills of his native Nithsdale, he cried out, "I could pass through these mountains were they clothed in flame if I could only be sure that God loves me."[1]

¶ One Sunday night, as I was preaching in my own place, I had finished the sermon, as I thought, with the declaration of the sufficiency of Christ. I had closed the sermon, and had passed

[1] J. Hunter.

down to the vestry, when a plain working man followed me in. He said, "Did you finish your sermon just now?" I said, "Yes, I think so; I meant to." "I think," he said, "there is something you did not say; you spoke about the forgiveness of sins, and the sufficiency of Christ, and the love of God in Redemption; but there is something else you did not say, and it is a part I never like to be left out." I said, "What is it?" "Why," he said, "years ago I was brought to Christ; and a terrible load I took to Him. I placed it down at the Cross, and I thought all was right. But the next morning my skies were grey. The next day I was beaten in the Valley of Humiliation fighting with Apollyon. He won. My temptation was too strong, I failed and I fell, I failed again, till everybody ceased to believe in me; and I ceased to believe in myself, and held myself in contempt. At last, one day, in desperation, I raised my hands to heaven and said, 'Lord Jesus, I claim Thy promise, I claim Thy power, look at me to-night.'" The man, continuing, said, "For five years He has kept me as I am, and I am amongst the living to praise Him. Preach, I beseech you, next time you approach this subject, preach that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. The Saviour can battle with temptation, and make us sufficient, every time the assault comes, to win the victory for the glory of God."[1]

¶ The motto of the order of knighthood called St. Patrick is "Quis separabit": "Who shall separate?"

Yea, of this I am persuaded—
Neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels—
No, not the Celestial Hierarchy,
Not "they that excel in strength"—
Nor the present world, nor the world to come;
Nor the height of Heaven,
Nor the abyss of Hades,
Nor aught else in God's creation,
Shall avail to sever us from the love of God,
The love incarnated in the Messiah, in Jesus,
Our Lord—ours![2]

[1] R. J. Campbell. [2] A. S. Way.

ANATHEMA FROM CHRIST.

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ANATHEMA FROM CHRIST.

For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh.—Rom. ix. 3.

1. THOSE who have ever thought of these words at all must have thought of them with amazement. "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ." Anathema—that which is put under the ban and irrevocably devoted to destruction. Terrible enough would have been that word anathema, "accursed from Christ," if it had brought with it only the thoughts which a Jewish reader would have associated with it. To come under all the curses, dark and dread, which were written in the Book of the Law; to be cursed in waking and sleeping, going out and coming in, in buying and selling, in the city and in the field; to be shunned as a leper was shunned, hated as a Samaritan was hated, shut out from fellowship with all human society that had been most prized, from all kindly greeting of friends and neighbours—this was what he would have connected with the words as their least and lowest meaning.

The Christian reader, possibly the Jewish also, would have gone yet further. The Apostle's own words would have taught him to see more. To be delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh"; to come under sharp pain of body, supernaturally inflicted, and to feel that excruciating agony, or loathsome plague, was the deserved chastisement of a sin against truth and light; to be shut out from all visible fellowship with the body of Christ, and therefore from all communion with Christ Himself; to be as in the outer darkness while the guests were feasting in the illumined chamber, here too to be shunned by those who had been friends and brothers—this would have been the Christian thought as to excommunication in the apostolic age.

But beyond all this the Apostle found a deeper gulf, a more

terrible sentence. To be anathema from Christ, cut off for ever from that eternal life which he had known as the truest and highest blessedness, sentenced for ever to that outer darkness, the wailing and gnashing of teeth—this was what he had prayed for, if it might have for its result the salvation of his brethren. He had but just asked triumphantly, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Now he is prepared, for that reward, if it were so possible, to separate himself.

2. But we must be careful not to treat the language of feeling as if it were that of reasoning and reflexion. St. Paul has proved that without Christ all men are lost, and lost hopelessly. He turns to show the abounding love of God, who in His Son has opened a way of salvation for all. He strives to express the magnitude of that salvation. Carried beyond himself, he breaks forth into the grandest of all his doxologies: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."

Borne far beyond the present, and now bathed in the light of the Eternal love, he remembers the unutterable loss of those who will not go with him. Must he leave his people in their darkness? The thought wrings his heart. A counter-wave of horror rushes over him. It sweeps him from Hermon into Gethsemane. Never before, perhaps, has he approached so near the mind of Him who wept over His countrymen, crying, "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!"

His father, his mother—great Israel, with all its faults the noblest race the earth has seen; to whom first the promises were given, first the glory was offered; stem of which Christ Himself had come—these Israelites alone of all the world he sees rejecting the world's Saviour. The Master's own parable is in his brain. The great day is near, has come. He sees the chosen people, his own people, upon the left hand. He hears the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed!" That he sees, that he hears. For the instant he sees no more, hears no more. He cannot reason, he can only feel. "My brethren are doomed! My

brethren are lost!" Love shrieks while reason reels: "Save them! Send me away, but save them! I am one, they are many." In such a moment come the words: "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, . . . whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

¶ An inferior, self-conscious spirit could not have spoken as St. Paul spoke. St. Paul himself could speak thus only when the unutterable vision had fused his soul and burned away its dross. The nearest approach to this glowing utterance was made by Moses when he too had been closeted with God, had talked with God as a man talketh with his friend, had caught enough of the Divine spirit to think of others more than of himself. Then for an instant he forgot who had taught him to love and to sacrifice; for that instant he fancied he loved men more than God loved them, and exclaimed in substance, "If thou wilt not forgive them, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written." Moses had left the Divine presence but a little moment when he lost power to speak such words. Spoken deliberately, they would be blasphemy. Spoken in the supreme moment when the heaven-kindled heart melts the fetters of the intellect, they are doxologies. If we picture God in the image of a small-souled, jealous lover, of course we shall count such language blasphemous. If we remember that God is God, it will seem prayer.

¶ When John Knox cried in an agony, "Give me Scotland or I die!" was he not setting his will against the Eternal? Was it not his business to live and work willingly, though it should not be God's purpose to give him Scotland? Reason and reflexion are ready to answer "Yes!" What God Himself thought of John Knox's prayer we may read in the way He answered it.

¶ I like a bit of hyperbole in our hymns; for instance, I admire the extravagance of that verse of Addison's—

> But O eternity's too short
> To utter all Thy praise!

A gentleman said to me, "That cannot be, because eternity cannot be too short for anything." If the Lord had put a drop of poetry into that critic's nature he would not have dealt so hardly with the poet's language; and if the same Lord had put a little of the fire of grace into the nature of some hard-headed commentators, they would have understood that this passage is not meant to be cut to pieces and discussed, but is intended to be taken boiling hot

and poured upon the enemy, after the fashion of the olden times, when they poured melted lead or boiling pitch upon the besiegers who wished to take a tower or city. Such a text as this must be fired off red-hot; it spoils if it cools. It is a heart business, not a head business.[1]

It will be our wisdom not to criticize the words, but to catch such gleams as we may of the spirit that shines through them. The text is a statement not of fact but of feeling. We will look at it first as it represents the mind of St. Paul the Christian, second as it represents the feeling of St. Paul the Patriot, and lastly as it represents the spirit of St. Paul the Preacher.

I.

The Mind of the Christian.

St. Paul had caught himself praying that he might be anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake. In his prayer he is looking at his countrymen from the Christian standpoint. It is not their bodies but their souls that he longs for. Over them he agonizes and feels as though no sacrifice would be too great for him to make if thereby he could secure their salvation. True, St. Paul's wish is checked, arrested in his heart; in thought, as in expression, it is imperfect; his feeling that it could not be realized keeps it from completion; so that probably there never rose before him those tremendous conditions and consequences of its fulfilment which have perplexed the critics of his words. But he cannot mean less than this: that as he thought of those with whom in God's providence he was united by the bonds of a common kindred, and history, and nationality, and hope; as he saw them spurning their own peace, belying their true life, and falling out from that great Godward movement of mankind which they had been called and trained and singled out to lead; and as this sight, in all the pity of it, reached in him those deep capacities of joy and pain which are the strength of a man's wider life, he felt as if no fulness or intensity or purity of personal delight could be too much for him to part with, even for ever and ever, if it were conceivable, that so his people might be brought into the peace of God through the knowledge and the love of Jesus Christ our

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.

Lord. As some have dared to die for the sake of their country, as others for the common good have borne the parting of friends, the loss of fame and work and happiness, the taunts of inconsistency or cowardice, so to St. Paul even the everlasting joy that passes man's understanding, even the communion that is beyond all human love, seem less decisive in their control over his desires than the thought of all his nation turning from their blindness and rebellion to adore the Saviour they had crucified, and to find rest for ever in the love they had despised.

1. St. Paul had not this spirit of himself, nor do we have it of ourselves. He was *animated by the spirit of God and of Christ.*

(1) *God* is zealous for the redemption of souls. He clad Himself with zeal as with a cloak. God so loved the world, with such exceeding might and weight of love,—pure love, undeserved love, love which had and could have no return,—that He gave, not angels, not worlds, not adopted or created sons, but His only begotten co-equal Son to death, that man might live.

(2) And who can speak of the spirit of *Christ*—the spirit of Him who became as one of us, who dwelt eternally in the bosom of His Father's love, and thence, from His royal throne, came to take the sinful infirmities of our human nature? Throughout His earthly life He commanded winds, seas, the dead, and they obeyed Him; His creative Word passed upon the bread and it was multiplied. He died only because He willed; He rose when He willed. But for us and for our salvation He willed all His life long to suffer. Such was His zeal for souls, that they said of Him, "He is beside himself." He had the same zeal for a single soul as for His whole people. He beheld and loved each single soul with an undivided love. He loved one soul with the same love as the whole human race. The conversion of one sinful, disordered woman is to Him "meat and drink." One lost sheep, one prodigal, one son who repented and did his Father's will, which he had insolently refused, pictures at once each single soul and all for whom He died. Each one He lays on His shoulders, and bears to His home, the heavenly courts. He falls on the neck of each single penitent, and gives him the kiss of peace. Each returned sinner, who at last does His will, He owns as having ever done it. During life, He was straitened until His

Baptism in His own blood was accomplished. His love was pent in, as it were, His spirit was held in, confined, pressed together, not allowed to expand itself, as it would, in love, until that awful hour, when, rejected by those whom He came to save, He seemed to be forsaken by God also.[1]

2. St. Paul's spirit was *not that of a beginner in the Christian faith.*—A man's religion, like most else within him, often begins in selfishness. If it is true religion, it cannot end in selfishness. The child sees in his mother at first only the reservoir of food and comfort. He seeks her bosom for his own sake. By and by he will love her in another way. Not what he can gain from her, but what he can do for her, then becomes his quest. "What must I do to be saved?"—that is often the sinner's first cry. Religion is a fleet of life-boats: leap into them, cut away from the sinking vessel, row hard each for himself! "What must I do to be saved?" With that cry the sinner may come to Christ. But if he tarries with Jesus the cry will change into, "What may I do to save?"

> Who seeks for heaven alone to save his soul,
> May keep the path, but will not reach the goal;
> While he who walks in love may wander far,
> But God will bring him where the Blessed are.[2]

3. *Such a spirit knows the joy of the Lord.*—St. Paul himself, at the very moment when he prayed that he might be accursed from Christ, was entering more fully into the joy of his Lord than he had ever done before, because then, more than ever, that mind was in him which was also in Christ Jesus. As the Master "did not count equality with God a thing to be snatched at as a prize, but emptied himself" even of the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was," of the conscious energy of the Divine attributes, so did the servant count that the glory yet to be revealed was not "a prize" for himself, was content, even while he pressed forward to the mark of his high calling, to forgo even that, and to "empty himself" also of the blessings of the adoption and the promises. And therefore the joy of the servant also, like that of the Master, was unspeakable and full of glory. As the heart knew its own bitterness, the bitterness of

[1] E. B. Pusey. [2] Henry Van Dyke.

that self-surrender, so there was a joy with which the stranger did not intermeddle.

¶ When Bishop Hannington was only a curate in Devonshire, he gave himself to Christ, and was at length able to write, "I know now that Jesus Christ died for me, and that He is mine, and I am His." He had surrendered himself wholly to Christ. "I am His." Now look at the love that broadened and deepened in the self-surrendered soul. In 1882 he started from the coast of Africa for the interior. He was beset with difficulties, but the love within him was unmoved. On the first of August he wrote the beautiful, triumphant words, "I am very happy. Fever is trying, *but it does not take away the joy of the Lord*, and keeps me low in the right place."[1]

¶ The Joy of Christ in His Sacrifice was the joy of man under conditions of heroic unselfishness. The Joy which was set before Him in His Sacrifice was in part this: that He perceived with the delight of heroic unselfishness how His sufferings were preparing Him an access into human hearts, an avenue to their deepest confidence. To one who deeply loves humanity, whose passion is the passion of helpfulness, there are moments when suffering, whether of mind or of body, seems worth all it costs, because of the added power that comes through it to understand those who suffer, and to gain their confidence. Though we may have known hours of darkness, hours of humiliation, hours when the burden of living seemed greater than we could bear, who regrets the sufferings of those hours, if, by means of them, we learned to read the secret of humanity's sorrow in a way that fitted us to meet humanity's need?[2]

¶ A touching legend of filial piety has connected itself with one of the great bells in a temple near Peking. A famous worker in metals, it is said, had received the Emperor's command to cast a bell of unusual size, the tone of which was to surpass in richness and melody all other bells. Severe penalties were threatened if he came short of the wishes of his exacting master. He tried and failed, tried and failed again, and was upon the point of giving up his task in despair. At this crisis in his fortunes, his only daughter, a maiden of great beauty and virtue, went secretly to consult an astrologer. The man of magic told her the work could be brought to a successful accomplishment only if the blood of a chaste virgin were mingled with the molten metal, when it was ready to be poured into the mould. Returning home she asked leave to watch her father's work, and when the ingredients had

[1] J. A. Clapperton. [2] C. C. Hall.

been fused and were seething in the vast cauldron, in an outburst of filial piety she threw herself into the sea of fire. The bell thus cast proved of incomparable quality, and whenever it is struck, the natives of the district think they hear the girl's dying cry, in the sweetness and pathos of its notes. Such filial piety, if achieved at all, could only be achieved through struggle and consummated in dire distress. The legend represents the last cry of the victim as a weird note of pain, a *vox humana* trembling up out of inscrutable abysses of tribulation. The Chinese imagination had scarcely soared into those spiritual realms where Divine love can change pain into contentment and deep joy.[1]

II.

The Feeling of the Patriot.

No sacrifice, St. Paul felt, was too great for him to make—for whom? "For my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." All Christian believers were his brethren spiritually, but it was the Jews who were his brethren by natural relationship. So let us look at St. Paul's words as they express his patriotic spirit—his love for his fellow-countrymen and his fatherland. He has just finished his glowing description of the position and prospects of the elect people of God. And then, by contrast, the misery of the outcast people once called elect—his own people—wrings his heart with pain. The very idea that in his new enthusiasm for the Catholic Church he can be supposed to be forgetting those who are of his own flesh and blood, stirs him to a profound protest. He solemnly asseverates that the pain which Israel's rejection causes him is acute and continuous. He has caught himself at the point of praying to be himself an outcast from Christ, if so be he could bring the people of his own kindred and blood into the Church.

For who indeed could seem to have so good a title to be there? They are the Israelites—that is, God's own people; the eye of God was so specially upon this race that He redeemed it and made it His own son; to them was vouchsafed the shining of His continual presence in the Tabernacle; to them, in the persons of the patriarchs and of Moses, God gave special covenants, that is to say, pledged His word to them in an unmistakable manner

[1] T. G. Selby.

and repeatedly that He should be their God and they should be His people; thus in pursuance of a Divine purpose they were brought under the education of the Divinely given law and ritual worship; and all this with direct and repeated promises of a more glorious position in the future to be brought about by the Divine king, the Christ who was to be. To them, finally, belongs all the sanctity which can attach to a people from having numbered among its members the holy ones of God; for of this race were the patriarchs, the friends of God; and of this race, so far as human birth is concerned, came in fact the Christ who, born a Jew, is Sovereign of the universe and ever-blessed God. Surely then, St. Paul implies, that this race, now that the Christ they were expecting is at last come, now that the goal of all God's dealings with them is at last reached, should have fallen outside the circle of His people and should be no longer sharers in the sonship or the election would seem a result too monstrous to contemplate. The contrast between what they were and were intended for and what in present circumstances they are is indeed appalling.

1. *Patriotism is not a Christian virtue.*—It is not like humility, or meekness, or patient cross-bearing, which were not virtues at all till Jesus made them so. Much of the noblest patriotism that the world has known has been witnessed in countries that knew nothing of Christ Jesus: the love of country, like a mother's love for her children, blossomed and fruited long before Christ was born. The tale of Thermopylæ is not a Christian tale, yet as an instance of patriotism it is well-nigh peerless. The most famous line in literature about dying for one's country was written by a Roman and a pagan. The Greeks were all patriots; so are the Japanese. Long before Christ was born, and far beyond Christendom, the love of country has been powerful.

¶ Danton the Titan rises in this hour, as always in the hour of need. Great is his voice, reverberating from the domes: Citizen-Representatives, shall we not, in such crisis of Fate, lay aside discords? Reputation: O what is the reputation of this man or of that? "Que mon nom soit flétri: que la France soit libre: Let my name be blighted: Let France be free!" [1]

¶ During the Russo-Japanese War a Japanese officer wrote

[1] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, iii. 134.

a letter to some friends in England. It was a very calm and business-like epistle, with little trace of sentiment. But after the signature, in true Western fashion, was a postscript, and in the postscript, as occasionally happens, was the news, for it said, "P.S. —I have just been ordered to the front, where it will be a pleasure to die for my country." I wish all postscripts from our Christian homes were as instinct with magnificent sentiment as that. A duty? A stern necessity? Even that would have been something; but a *pleasure* to die![1]

> I must be gone to the crowd untold
> Of men by the cause which they served unknown,
> Who moulder in myriad graves of old;
> Never a story and never a stone
> Tells of the martyrs who died like me,
> Just for the pride of the old countree.[2]

2. *But patriotism may be Christian patriotism.*—Just as the sunshine falling on the trees kindles them into unsuspected splendours, and just as the love of the mother for her child has been ennobled and transfigured by Christ Jesus, so the love of one's country, which is a common heritage implanted in the natural heart by God, has been touched into new glory by Christ Jesus.

¶ If I were attempting a survey of the whole field of the literature of patriotism, the very first book to which I should need to ask your attention would be our sacred Scriptures; for nowhere will you find a more intense patriotism than glows in the words of some of its psalmists and prophets. And in New Testament times, when the Jewish nation had fallen upon evil days, even those who knew that her ancient glory had departed for ever still clung to her with passionate longing. Paul could wish that he himself were anathema from Christ for his brethren's sake, his kinsmen according to the flesh. And who can forget Christ's reverence for the great names in Jewish history, His observance of His nation's customs, His tears over the doomed city of Jerusalem? Did He not say that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? And when He sent forth His disciples on their world-wide mission did He not charge them to "begin at Jerusalem"? He who says that "Christianity kills patriotism" has misunderstood either one or the other or both.[3]

[1] G. H. Morrison. [2] Sir Alfred Lyall.
[3] George Jackson, *A Young Man's Bookshelf*, 12°

(1) Let us look first of all at Jesus Christ the Patriot, and let us remember that though the patriotism of Jesus be obscured by His world-wide mission and His care for single souls, there has never moved across this earth a truer patriot than the prophet of Nazareth at whose feet we bow. He was a Jew after the flesh, and that is enough. With all the passion of a Jew He loved His country. We shall never understand Christ's hatred of the Pharisees, nor shall we ever comprehend His tears over Jerusalem, unless we remember that the lover of mankind was also a lover of His little country. Patriotism is never so strong as when the country that inspires it is a little one. Britain is little, Switzerland is little, Japan is little, Palestine was little; and these are the countries, perhaps above all others, where love of the homeland has been supreme. Into that heritage, then, Christ Jesus entered. He was a prophet; He was the son of David. The past was alive for Him, and the hills and the lakes were dear—twice dear because consecrated with such holy memories.

¶ Is it not a patriot of whom we read that "when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes"? Is there not deep love of country in the cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not"? It is a disappointed patriot who, when He finds a stranger ready to recognize in the Man of Sorrows the conqueror of disease and death, exclaims, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in *Israel*." In all the labour of Jesus Christ there seems to be a yearning desire that the Jewish people should be His fellow-workers, and it is only when He finds them determinedly opposed to Him that He goes to the Gentiles. It is hardly too much to say that we have evidence of the longing of the Founder of our faith that those of His own nation should be the missioners to the outside world. Few sharper pangs can have been felt by our Master than that one, to which the prophet had beforehand testified as one of the sufferings of the Messiah: "We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not"; and to which reference is made by St. John in the first chapter of his Gospel, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."[1]

[1] H. R. Wakefield.

¶ What is great in patriotism comes not from the love of one's own country to the exclusion of others, but from the forgetfulness of one's own self in the possession of a larger idea of humanity. Christ as a patriot would have been adored by the Jews, and probably recognized as the Messiah. They hated Him because He loved the Gentile.[1]

(2) Let us look at St. Paul's patriotism—that is, at Christian patriotism, as distinguished from all other. Christian patriotism concerns itself with the moral and the spiritual rather than the physical and the external. It can never be enough for a Christian citizen that each census gives a larger population than the last, that the Savings Banks are congested with money, that the volume of trade is swollen, that the rate of wages is rising, that the arms of the country have prevailed over foreign foes, or that we have annexed another province. For he knows that a land may be populous, and rich, and strong, and feared, whose people are miserable, and whose dependencies are spoiled. He has been taught that a nation is blessed only when its homes are full of peace and its power is used for righteousness. Patriotism must labour for the good of all and the injury of none, to build up a nation in faith towards God and love towards man. Jesus warned His contemporaries that if they persisted in their unreasoning fanaticism, the end would be a bath of blood; and can any one doubt that if the Jews had listened to His voice they would have possessed their own land to-day, and their glory have had no shadow?

¶ He who does not desire the salvation of those who are his own kith and kin—"how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Christianity is expansive, it makes the bosom glow with love to all that God has made; but, at the same time, our love does not expand so as to lose force; and this is seen when it turns its power towards those who are nearest home. Are our neighbours unsaved? Let us lay them on our heart and cease not to plead till they are in Christ. Think much of the heathen; by all means regard India and China, and the like, but do not forget Newington Butts, and Lambeth, and Southwark. Next to our homes let our neighbourhoods be considered, and then our country, for all Englishmen are akin. Wherever we wander we are proud of our common country, and, like the Romans of old, we are somewhat quick to make known our citizenship; therefore,

[1] Lord Houghton, *Life*, ii. 492.

let us never cease to plead for this beloved island and our kinsmen according to the flesh. For his countrymen St. Paul prayed; and never let us bear within our bones a soul so deaf as to forget our native land.[1]

(3) Christian patriotism recognizes that the worst enemies of a people are their sins. Christ would have said of countries what St. Paul said of himself, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness." To the average Jew the great enemy was Rome, for Rome had enslaved Palestine. To the average Jew the first task of a true patriot was to hurl defiance at that intruding power. It is very significant and very strange that no such defiance fell from the lips of Jesus. How men would have hailed Him had He cried, "Woe unto you, ye Romans!" With His gifts and His eloquence and His Davidic birth, He would have been the hero of the people. But He never cried, "Woe unto you, ye Romans"; He cried, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees." That, too, was the cry of a patriot, but it brought the patriot to Calvary. For it means that in the eyes of Jesus Christ there are worse enemies than spears and swords; there are national foes that can be far more deadly than the battalions of an invading army. In the long-run, if any nation perishes, it is not another's guns, it is its own sins, that ruin it. Christ taught that by His life. Christ sealed that by His death.

> It is not to be thought of that the Flood
> Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
> Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
> Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
> Roused though it be full often to a mood
> Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
> That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
> Should perish; and to evil and to good
> Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
> Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
> We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
> That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
> Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
> Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.[2]

¶ Ruskin had to my mind one distinguishing mark of the true

[1] C. H. Spurgeon. [2] Wordsworth.

prophet—that he was no patriot. He was concerned with human rather than with national welfare. I am not decrying the force of patriotism, or the part it plays in the development of the human race. But there is a nobler enthusiasm than even the enthusiasm for race and nation; because the triumph of patriotism must necessarily carry with it the quenching of the aspirations of other nations, their defeat and their discomfiture. It is only tyranny on a larger scale. Ruskin no doubt miscalculated and misunderstood the nature of his countrymen, the insularity and the isolation which mark their conquering path. But no one who cares for the larger hopes of humanity can hope or dream that the end is to be limited by national greatness. That is not a popular vision in England, unless it is accompanied by a proviso that the seat of the federated government of the world shall be in London, and that English shall be the language of the human race. But Ruskin judged other nations not according to their resemblance to our own race, but by their virtue and nobility.[1]

Once Babylon, by beauty tenanted
In pleasure palaces and walks of pride,
Like a great scarlet flower reared her head,
Drank in the sun and laughed and sinned and died.[2]

III.

The Spirit of the Preacher.

Let us now look at the text as it manifests the true spirit of the preacher.

1. *St. Paul the Preacher.*—Some one has pointed out the striking contrast between the dominant interest with which St. Paul says, "I must also see Rome," and that which the words would ordinarily reveal. The Apostle was eager to visit the imperial city only because he was eager to preach there also the Gospel of Christ. Every other ambition of his life had passed into this. All the waters of his soul had gathered themselves into one mighty flood to be poured through the narrows of this single purpose: "To preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation

[1] A. C. Benson, *Ruskin: A Study in Personality*, 221.
[2] Richard Burton.

of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things." The urgency of his message burned like a fire in his bones; his passion to win men was like a Divine constraint which gave him no rest.

2. *The passion for souls, the spirit of true preaching.* — Is not this passion to win men the very heart of preaching? It is the ultimate fountain of the prophetic preaching, the secret of both the pathos and the splendours of its style. "To the prophets preaching was no mere display, but a sore battle with the hard hearts of their contemporaries, in which the messenger of the Lord worked with the pity of his weakness upon him, at a supreme cost to himself and conscious that he must summon to his desperate task every resource of feeling and of art."

¶ It must be a passion: a fire burning with the steady flame of anthracite fed by a constant stream of oil. If it be less we will be swept off our feet by the tides all around, or sucked under by their swift current. And many a splendid man to-day is being swept off his feet and sucked under by the tides and currents of life because no such passion as this is mooring and steadying and driving his whole life. It must be a passion for winning men; not driving or dragging, but drawing. Not argument or coercion, but warm winsome wooing. To-day the sun up yonder is drawing up toward itself thousands of tons' weight of water. Nobody sees it going, except perhaps in very small part. There is no noise or dust. But the water rises up irresistibly toward the sun because of the winning power in the sun for the water. It must be something like that in the higher sphere—winsomeness in us will win men to us, and through us to the master.[1]

¶ Whitefield's favourite maxim was that a preacher, whenever he entered the pulpit, should look upon it as the last time he might preach, and the last time his people might hear. Or, take Wesley's *Journal*. "There is hardly any book like it," says Dr. Robertson Nicoll; "its shrewdness, its wit, its wisdom, its knowledge are bordered with a pale edge of fire—the spiritual passion of the great apostle's soul." Let one revealing sentence speak for the whole book. In 1742 Wesley visited Newcastle-on-Tyne for the first time. Never, he says, had he witnessed so much drunkenness, cursing and swearing, from the mouths of little children as well as of adults, in so short time. "Surely," he writes, "this

[1] S. D. Gordon.

place is ripe for"—what? judgment? no, but—"for Him who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."[1]

3. *The inspiration of this passion.*—This passion for souls is the true apostolic spirit of preaching; and, be it remembered, it springs only from the true apostolic faith and experience. No man can know this vehement fervour of desire to win men for Christ who is not himself wholly swayed by that faith, and in whose soul that great experience has never repeated itself. "God give to us preachers," said one the other day, "a perpetual sense of glad, wonderful surprise at our own salvation." And when that prayer is answered, and we who preach preach as Brownlow North was sometimes said to preach—like one who had just escaped from a sacked and burning city, his ear still stung with the yell of the dying and the roar of the flame, his heart full of gratitude at the thought of his own wonderful escape—deaf ears will be unstopped and dead souls raised to life.

¶ The great actor, Garrick, was asked by a clergyman why the stage seemed to have more power than the pulpit. This was his answer: "Too many preach truth as if it were fiction; we act fiction as if it were truth."[2]

With grief his head was bowèd low,
His heart, that heart so dear to me.
"Give him Thy light, O God," I cried,
(I love him so: I love him so.)
"Give him Thy light, whate'er betide,
Let all the shadow fall on me:
And if my spirit faileth so,
Then let me die. (Lord, Thou hast died.)"
It may not be.

"Since sorrow is our lot below
I bow my head to Thy decree.
In darkness, then, let me abide,
(I love him so: I love him so.)
I will not fail although the tide
In whelming flood pass over me:
Let me but share his cross of woe.
(They pierced Thy feet and hands and side.)"
It may not be.

[1] G. Jackson.

[2] Francis Pigou, *Odds and Ends*, 153.

"Through the dread darkness must he go
Alone? Ah God, the agony
To see a soul made white and tried,
(I love him so: I love him so.)
To see a spirit purified
By Thy pure fires!—I ask of Thee
But this one gift—a heart to know
Thy love—to trust Thy mercy wide
For him—for me."[1]

[1] Margaret Blaikie, *Songs by the Way*, 26.

The Heart and the Mouth.

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The Heart and the Mouth.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—Rom. x. 10.

1. St. Paul's singularly free, but deeply inspired, manner of applying texts from the Old Testament is especially illustrated in this passage. The passages quoted from Isaiah about the Stone, which St. Paul applies to Christ (see ix. 32, 33), refer originally to Jehovah simply in one case (Isa. xxviii. 16). Jewish tradition had possibly already referred them to the Christ; and certainly our Lord's use of Ps. cxviii. 22—"The stone which the builders rejected"—as applying to His own rejection, made the reference more obvious. It is indeed in deepest accordance with the spirit of Isaiah; and St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 6), we notice, follows St. Paul in the use of them. Another passage (lii. 7) quoted in verse 15, about the feet of those who preach good tidings, is transferred, with added meaning, from the heralds of the redemption from Babylon to the heralds of the greater redemption. Again, a passage from Ps. xix. quoted in verse 18 is transferred very beautifully from the witness of the heavens to the witness of the Gospel; as if St. Paul would say, grace is become as universal as nature.

In the same way the language of this passage, cited from Deuteronomy, is taken from the Law to express the spirit of the Gospel. The calling upon Jehovah in Joel becomes in St. Paul's quotation the calling upon Christ. All this free citation, uncritical according to our ideas and methods, rests on a profoundly right apprehension of the meaning of the Old Testament as a whole. The appeal to the Old Testament, even if not to the particular passage, is justified by the strictest criticism.[1]

We can look upon the whole passage (x. 5–10) in the light of

[1] Bishop Gore.

the view held by St. Augustine, that the words of Moses, understood in their true spiritual sense, describe a righteousness which is essentially the righteousness of faith (*de Nat. et Gratia*, § 83). Moses is in fact describing a religion of the heart: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." To one who thus turns with heart and soul to the Lord, obedience is easy: "The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." This, says St. Paul, is in substance "the word of faith, which we preach." St. Paul's explanation is not allegorical but spiritual; it penetrates through the letter of the Old Testament to its spirit, and that is the spirit of the Gospel.

2. The text contains two parts: *Belief* and *Confession*. This is the order—belief with the heart first, and confession with the mouth afterwards. But if we compare this verse with the preceding one, it is noticeable that St. Paul has reversed the order. In verse 9 it is confession with the mouth first, belief with the heart afterwards. Verse 9 explains the quotation used in verse 8, "The word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." The order is suggested by literary association, not by theological formulation. As "mouth" is mentioned before "heart," St. Paul speaks of confession of Christ before belief in Christ, but in verse 10 he rearranges his statement in true logical sequence. Belief with the heart must come first, confession with the mouth is the natural resultant.

I.

Belief.

"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

There are three things to keep before our minds in considering this section: (1) Belief is with the heart. (2) Belief must have a definite object or centre. The centre of our faith is Christ and His Resurrection. (3) Belief is productive of righteousness.

i. Belief is with the Heart.

1. It is important that we should lay particular stress upon St. Paul's meaning when he speaks of the "heart"; for if we are

to understand this difficult passage, we must try to analyse the meaning of the terms used. When we talk about the heart of man we usually mean the affections or emotions, but to the Jew the heart represented the whole spiritual man. We gather from the Old Testament that the heart was the source of all moral action, the source of the affections and purposes, and a symbol even of the mind and the will. The whole moral nature was represented by the term. And so St. Paul practically affirms that man believes with the whole of his nature. Not only his intellect and emotions and affections, but the whole nature in all its scope and powers—all are taken up into this "righteousness of faith."

¶ The believing heart is indispensable to the discovery of truth. I do not say that it is indispensable to the discovery of *all* truth, although there is a sense in which it is true that no truth can be discovered without it. I do say that the truth he needs cannot be discovered by any man unless one of the organs by which he sets about perceiving it is the heart of trust and faith. No man by mathematical reasoning can get at the whole truth. We know that no man arrives at all that range of truth which is personal by his mathematical reasoning; that he gets at that, if he ever gets at it at all, by quite other faculties. That is what Tennyson declares in his protest in "In Memoriam":

> If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
> I heard a voice "believe no more"
> And heard an ever-breaking shore
> That tumbled in the Godless deep;
>
> A warmth within the breast would melt
> The freezing reason's colder part,
> And like a man in wrath the heart
> Stood up and answer'd, "I have felt."

He does not mean to shut out any one set of faculties; he simply means to assert on behalf of another set its rights in our search after and discovery of truth.[1]

¶ The heart has reasons which the reason does not know. It is the heart that feels God, not the reason. There are truths that are felt, and there are truths that are proved, for we know truth not only by reason but by the intuitive conviction which may be called the heart. The primary truths are not demonstrable, and

[1] R. E. Speer, *The Master of the Heart*, 35.

yet our knowledge of them is none the less certain. Principles are felt; propositions are proved. Truths may be above reason and yet not be contrary to reason.[1]

2. It is essential to this heart-faith that we have genuine love to God. In the absence of goodwill towards God, there can never be this faith of the heart. You remember how Cecil taught his little daughter the meaning of gospel faith. She came to him, one day, with her hands full of little beads, greatly delighted, to show them. He said to her calmly, "You had better throw them all into the fire." She was almost confounded; but when she saw that he was in earnest, she trustfully obeyed, and cast them in. After a few days, he brought home for her a casket of jewels. "There, my daughter," said he; "you had faith in me the other day, and threw your beads into the fire; that was *faith*; now I can give you things much more precious. Are not these far better?" So you should always believe in God. He has jewels for those who will believe and cast away their sins.[2]

¶ A Christian lawyer from Cripple Creek told me once, as we talked over the question of how a man might get his life righted, of an experience of his own years ago, when, in a great deal of perplexity, he had gone to his old pastor to ask him for help as to how he might get his life directed aright. He said the old man simply turned to the 32nd Psalm and read him these two verses: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in, else they will not come near unto thee." Then, my friend said, the old man shut up his Bible and turned away. At first he felt no little resentment at his pastor for this curt way of replying to his inquiry; but when he went away and thought it over he saw that the whole secret of a right life lay just here, that the only way in which God could ever guide a man was not by some mechanical instruction, not by fitting a bit into a man's mouth and pulling him this way and that with a rein, but by planting in his heart His own Spirit and letting that Spirit guide him.[3]

ii. The Centre of Belief is in Christ and His Resurrection.

1. The argument of the preceding verses is that to confess Jesus as Lord implies a true faith in the incarnate, risen, ascended

[1] Pascal. [2] O. G. Finney. [3] R. E. Speer.

Christ. It is the proof of the faith that it manifests itself in confession. Now it is impossible to suppose for a moment that St. Paul is speaking of a merely intellectual assent to the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord. It might appear that he inserted the words "with the heart" to prevent such a misconception. But, on the other hand, we must beware of completely sundering "heart" and "head" beliefs, according to modern phraseology. St. Paul, on the contrary, unites them, for the "heart" must be understood to include the intellect, since it embraces the whole spiritual and moral being. It is the entirety of our nature that must be absorbed in a living, active, personal faith in Christ as our risen Lord and Saviour.

¶ There can be no doubt that the belief in a historical Christ and a historical resurrection is the only basis on which a living certainty of life beyond the grave can be placed.[1]

2. This belief was not an act of the intellect alone; it was scarcely even a conscious act of the individual. For we must keep in mind, in considering this message to the disciples of Christ at Rome, the vast difference between their age and the age in which we live. There was a feeling produced among the early believers in Christ by the common atmosphere which every member of the society breathed. The individual rarely detached himself from the community of which he was a part, weighed the evidences for himself, and formed his own creed. There was such a community of belief amongst them that the creed was in reality common to all, the only difference, perhaps, being that some felt it with greater intensity than others, were more influenced by its power and warmth. But the belief was common. They had one mind, and one heart. The power of the Spirit of Christ and the belief that He rose from the dead possessed them.

¶ The contrast between the religion of Jesus and that organized and enforced by Moses was not greater than the contrast between the people in St. Paul's time and the people of to-day. These Christians felt the power of the Spirit of Christ, and as a consequence they believed in His resurrection. The whole position has been reversed, and the polemical reasoners of to-day first set about proving the fact of the resurrection in order that men may feel Christ's power. They build up their arguments.

[1] John Stuart Blackie, *Life*, ii. 321.

and then say that men ought to be conscious of the influence of Christ.[1]

When I heard the learned astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.[2]

iii. Belief is productive of Righteousness.

1. The conviction of the heart, which is inevitably confessed with the mouth, is no barren creed. It is a spiritual force within us making always for righteousness.

2. Two conditions of morality are secured to us by the Resurrection of our Lord: (1) Grace to enable effort. (2) Hope to inspire effort.

(1) *Grace to enable effort.*—"Howbeit," writes the Apostle, in days, like our own, of religious controversy and confusion, "the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." Just because the Resurrection demonstrates the Lordship of Christ, and authenticates His claim to be the Bread from Heaven, by which we may live immortally, so is it inseparably connected with His summons to live righteously.

(2) *Hope to inspire effort.*—The victory of Christ is seen to carry consequences of the utmost importance. He is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh; in the indivisible unity of the human race He becomes for us all the pledge of final triumph. In Him we are sharers of that conquering manhood which overcame the very principle of mortality. By Him we are made strong to overcome sin, and assured of immortal life. There is no longer any place for the dreary suspicion that for us, being

[1] A. H. M. Sime. [2] Walt Whitman.

what and where we are in the world, there is no power to resist evil, that in sad truth the quest of the higher life is not for us. St. Paul bids the weakest and worst of us build boldly on the foundation of Christ's victory: "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." There is no place now for that withering sickness of the spirit, aghast at the futility of all human effort, shadowed and menaced and mocked by the inevitable stroke of death. "The things which are not seen are eternal," and our true life is "hid with Christ in God." "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord."

¶ The believing heart is ever essential to the living of a consistent and real life. There never was yet in the world an absolutely consistent infidel. Life would break down for the man who did not live practically on faith, however much theoretically he may cast it out of his life. You remember the verses which have been wrongly attributed to Charles Kingsley:

There is no unbelief!
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.

Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky,
Be patient, heart, light breaketh by and by,
Trusts the Most High.

Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows God will keep.

Whoever says "to-morrow," "the unknown,"
"The future"—trusts unto that Power alone
He dares disown.

The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,
And dares to live when life has only woes,
God's comfort knows.

There is no unbelief;
And still by day and night, unconsciously,
The heart lives by the faith the lips decry,
God knoweth why.

II.

Confession.

"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The beginning of the Christian life has two sides: internally it is the change of heart which faith implies; this leads to righteousness, the position of acceptance before God; externally it implies the "confession of Christ crucified" which is made in baptism, and this puts a man into the path by which in the end he attains salvation; he becomes one who is "being saved."[1]

¶ At times, the elders of the Hurons, the repositories of their ancient traditions, were induced to assemble at the house of the Jesuits, who explained to them the principal points of their doctrine, and invited them to a discussion. The auditors proved pliant to a fault, responding, "Good," or "That is true," to every proposition; but when urged to adopt the faith which so readily met their approval, they had always the same reply: "It is good for the French; but we are another people, with different customs."[2]

i. A Baptismal Confession.

1. There seems to be no doubt that St. Paul has in mind some form of Baptismal Confession of Faith. Such a confession marks the external side of the beginning of the Christian life. The first formal creeds we meet with are Baptismal Confessions. The story of the Ethiopian baptized by Philip is an instance. Philip told him about Christ, and the Ethiopian, impressed by what he heard, asked to be baptized. "Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

2. No idea existed at first of an exclusive creed; indeed, there was no one universal, unvarying form of creed. Each Church, while teaching the same truths as the others, had its

[1] Sanday and Headlam.

[2] Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America*, i. 150.

own form of expressing them. The candidate for baptism who had been taught the Christian history and doctrine in a class with others, freely and discursively, had no suspicion of the creed with which at length he was entrusted, which he had to commit to memory, but which was never written down. He had no disposition to doubt, nor the Church to be inquisitorial. Men became Christian because they were eager to believe the Gospel message; anxious to know more of it; and to know it soon, before they died a martyr's death.

¶ The creed in early days was called the Symbolum or symbol. Various meanings have been given to this name. But whether we regard it as meaning a military sign, *tessera militaris*, or whether it was adopted from the Greek mysteries, which committed a sign to the keeping of the initiated, it was a sign which the Christian carried about with him. By it he gained admission, wherever he might be, to the Christian Church, and by it he claimed the brotherly service of those who shared in the same faith. Their creed was their symbol, their secret, their pride.[1]

> Think not the Faith by which the just shall live
> Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven;
> Far less a feeling, fond and fugitive,
> A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given;—
> It is an Affirmation and an Act
> That bids eternal youth be present fact.[2]

ii. Unto Salvation.

"Confession is made unto salvation."

In what sense is it true that confession is thus closely connected with salvation? Two replies may be given to this question.

1. First of all, confession of faith is necessary to the salvation of others. It has pleased God to make the saving of men dependent on the work and activity of those who are already saved, and there is no single part of that work more important or more fruitful in results than the open confession "with the mouth" of the authority and love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is sometimes said that it is harder to live for Christ than to speak about

[1] W. Page-Roberts. [2] Hartley Coleridge

Him, but the statement is far from being universally true. There may be some who find little or no difficulty in speaking for Jesus to those who know Him not, but the greater number of Christian people know only too well how difficult a task it is to say anything to others of what is deepest and most sacred in their own hearts; and the difficulty grows greater and not less when they have to speak to those nearest and dearest to them. Many of us who would find little or no difficulty in speaking for Christ to a stranger are stricken dumb within our own homes.

¶ It is told in the *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers* that he spent an evening at Edgarstoun in the house of Mr. Rutherford. "His amiable wife was by the library fire with her sister-in-law, and Mr. Brown, a remarkably large stout man of seventy-two. He had been a parishioner in Cavers when Dr. Chalmers was assistant there, and the greetings and cordial inquiries between them were quite animated. We fell into devout discourse presently, and conversed till late." At length the company retired to rest, but in the early morning they were roused by a cry. Mr. Brown had suddenly been stricken down by death, and in a moment had been called from time into eternity. Chalmers suffered an agony of self-reproach that he had not spoken to him urgently of Christ. "It was touching to see him sit down on a bank repeatedly with tears in his eyes, and say, 'Ah! God has rebuked me; I know now what St. Paul means by being instant in season and out of season. Had I addressed that old man last night with urgency it might have seemed out of season to human eyes, but how seasonable it would have been.'"[1]

2. But the confession is also necessary to our own salvation. It is true we are saved by faith alone, but it is also true we are not saved, and cannot be saved, by faith that is alone. A faith kept to itself, confined within the soul, denied all expression, will soon cease to live. All deep emotion requires some kind of outward manifestation, or the emotion itself will die away. John Stuart Mill said that his father "starved his feelings by denying them expression"; and what is true of human feeling is even truer of those more sacred feelings the heart has for Christ. To believe in Jesus and never to speak to any single soul about Him, to lock up the secrets of faith in our own heart, is not only to imperil the salvation of others, it is to endanger our own. Faithfulness and

[1] *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, ii. 365.

faith are always closely connected; we cannot retain the one if we refuse the other. "Confession is made unto salvation."

It is true that the life is the greatest and most impressive witness for Christ, and that without the witness of the life all that the lips may utter for Him is worse than worthless; but this is not all the truth. Christ asks of us all more than the silent and daily witness of a holy life, He asks the testimony of our lips as well. He Himself lived a life that was the sublimest witness for God the world has ever beheld; but He was not content with living for God, He spoke for God as well. He was the Word as well as the Life, and He asks us here, as everywhere else, to follow Him. We are to be "living epistles"—letters which speak—"known and read of all men."

¶ One of the most serious dangers to the spiritual life is in its silence concerning itself. If there is peril in empty and light speech about sacred things, if there is little or no value in the glibness of a shallow heart that can chatter out all its most sacred experiences as if they were articles in the inventory of an auctioneer, there is even more peril in our never speaking at all of Him who has saved us. Much of the feebleness and depression of the spiritual life of to-day is owing to the fact that so many professed believers in Christ have forgotten that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"—their own as well as that of others.[1]

[1] G. S. Barrett.

The Body for God.

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THE BODY FOR GOD.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.—Rom. xii. 1.

1. WHAT St. Paul says to us here is no single or partial lesson dropped by the way. Standing where it does in his writings, it carries an exceptional weight of authority and breadth of meaning. It forms a kind of midpoint in the greatest and most comprehensive of his early Epistles. The two divisions of the Epistle are joined together by this text, itself St. Paul's own text and foundation for the moral teaching which follows it, as it is at the same time the immediate conclusion from the doctrinal teaching which has gone before. The doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans is justification by faith; the practical lesson of the Epistle to the Romans is self-consecration to God.

2. "I beseech you therefore"—take the words separately in order to understand the mind of the Apostle.

(1) Notice, to begin with, the word "therefore"; it connects this great appeal with what had gone before. St. Paul had been laying before his Roman readers the marvellous provision of grace, the sovereign love of God in adopting us into sonship; he had been picturing the wondrous wealth and resource of the Father's love: "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things: I beseech you *therefore*." That is always St. Paul's way: first the doctrine, then the duty; first the creed, then the character: because of what God has done, live in accordance with His will; first the principle of redemption, then the individual life that follows. It is so in the Epistle to the Ephesians; for the first three chapters he shows the marvellous light and life and heavenly possibility in Christ, then he adds in striking

suddenness, "I *therefore*, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy."[1]

(2) "*I* beseech you." This is the entreaty of a man who was himself living the life of bodily consecration to God. St. Paul had given himself up altogether to God, body, soul, and spirit. And now he was filled with the conscious strength and triumph of this sublime unity. His life was full-orbed and rounded perfectly. Every thought, every aim, every desire had in it the might of God; of God, and through God, and to God was the beat of every pulse, the throb of every thought, the life of every desire, and the strength of every work. There was of necessity in this man a constant sense of triumph. He moved about with a calm untroubled confidence, quite sure that all things were working together for the glory of the Lord, and for his good. There sang ever in his soul the music of those who serve God day and night in His holy temple. And then, in all the consciousness of this blessed life, he thinks of the half-hearted, of those who come far enough out of the far country to lose the husks of the swine, but not far enough to get the bread of the Father's house. These are the miserable people of the world, who admit the claims of God, and yet do not give themselves up to them; who pull for heaven, and yet do not cast off the rope that holds them to the shore. The Apostle's soul is stirred within him, and at once with a demand and an entreaty he cries: "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye give yourselves right up and wholly to God!" If this religion is worth anything it is worth all the mind and heart and strength that we can put into it.

(3) "I *beseech* you." Note the tenderness and winsomeness of St. Paul's language. "I beseech you." He struck the key-note there. It was his favourite word—he loved to play on the gentler notes in presenting Christ to men. His preaching was predominantly persuasive, pleading, and tender. Predominantly—it did not leave out the severities. Sometimes there was the voice of God's wrath in it, there were visions of the terrors of the Lord and of a judgment throne. But he was always most at home when he assumed the gentleness of a mother. "I beseech you." There is the sweet ring of that

[1] **A. E. Joscelyne.**

appeal in all his Epistles: "I beseech you by the gentleness of Christ"; "I beseech you by the compassions of Christ"; "We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God"; "I might be bold to enjoin thee, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee." We are told that in preaching he lifted up his hand. We can almost see that raised hand. It is never a clenched fist; it is never shaken in the face of a congregation; it is stretched out as if it would lay hold of people and sweetly constrain them. It quivers with emotion, and there is the sound of tears in his voice. "By the space of three years," he says, "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

(4) "I beseech *you*." Paul is speaking to Jews and Gentiles alike, united in the one Church, all taught by their own several histories that a Christless world is a world on the way downwards into darkness and death, all now raised to a new and endless and fruitful life in the crucified and risen Lord, all receivers of this gift by no claim of wages earned but by the mercy of the God who loved them. It is the sons of purity that he calls to suffer pain. It is to the souls captivated by love that he appeals for an exercise of self-denial. "Ye," he says, "who have yourselves been made white, ye who have received the mercy of your God, ye who by Divine grace have already reached the inner shrine of the sanctuary, I appeal to *you* to bear the burdens of humanity. I ask not those in the outer court. I ask not those who are one with the degraded multitude. I ask not those who are partners in the same sin as that of their guilty brother, and who, therefore, might be expected to bear his infirmities. I ask the white-robed. I appeal to the spotless. I call upon the pure in heart who see God. I cry, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore!" "I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice."

¶ When vaccination was introduced in Aberdeen, there existed a strong popular prejudice against it and a corresponding reluctance on the part of parents to allow their children to undergo that operation. It "went over" the medical men of Aberdeen to disabuse people's minds of the fear that it "would do more harm than good." This having come to Dr. Kidd's knowledge, he was determined that it should not go over *him*. He accordingly took

up the subject with characteristic energy, and at once set himself to acquire as much knowledge and information regarding it as he could from the local medical men and other available sources. In this way he soon mastered the theory of vaccination, but would not rest content until he had mastered the practice also; and having found a willing coadjutor in the person of a medical friend, he was soon able to perform the operation himself. Thus equipped, he frequently from the pulpit enforced on parents the duty of having their children vaccinated, and of giving them the benefit of that invaluable discovery. On one of these occasions he said, "If you mothers have any scruple about taking your children to a doctor, bring them to me, at my house, any week-day morning, between nine and ten o'clock, and I'll vaccinate them for you myself. You don't seem afraid to entrust the *souls* of your children to my care, and surely you won't have any fear to entrust me with their *bodies*." This appeal had a wonderful effect, and many mothers came to his house with their children at the daily appointed time. The result came to be that the prejudice against vaccination gradually subsided, and Dr. Kidd was soon able to discontinue his own amateur labours in favour of the medical men of the city, who, ere long, had as much work of that kind on their hands as they were well able to overtake. His personal ascendancy once more asserted itself, though even he had a stiff fight before he overcame the stubbornness and fears of the people. They had such faith in the man that they at last submitted, when their own judgment was unconvinced, and their own inclination was decidedly hostile.[1]

I.

The Motive Force.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God."

It was not a little step that St. Paul was urging these Roman Christians to take: "I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice." This act of consecration must have a motive adequate to produce it. The life of consecration must have a dynamic equal to sustaining it. Where is the motive power of the Christian life to be found?

1. It was in the "mercies of God" that the Apostle found his motive power. That plural does not mean that he is extending

[1] J. Stark, *Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen*, 173.

his view over the whole wide field of the Divine beneficence, but rather that he is contemplating the one all-inclusive mercy about which the former part of his letter has been so eloquent—viz. the gift of Christ—and contemplating it in the manifoldness of the blessings which flow from it. The mercies of God which move a man to yield himself as a sacrifice are not the diffused beneficences of His providence, but the concentrated love that lies in the person and work of His Son.

2. The emotionless moralist will tell you to do right for right's sake, because goodness is beautiful in itself and brings its own reward. And the stern moralist will advise you to pursue the clean and righteous course because the other way ends in a harvest of shame and sorrow. And, of course, both these voices are heard in the Bible; they are both used by the Christian preacher. But they are low down in the Christian scale; they have little force in the Christian conscience. There is no ring of persuasiveness in them, because there is no emotion and no fire. We never feel the kindling and the inspiration until we get to the very furnace, the power-producing furnace of the Christian life, and that is the soul-enthralling, love-creating mercies of God in Christ.

"The Well is deep."
Thy saying is most true:
Salvation's well is deep,
Only Christ's hand can reach the waters blue.
And even He must stoop to draw it up,
Ere He can fill thy cup.

3. It is impossible to be too careful in observing the connexion between consecration and mercy, for in the very vague theology of the present day there is a great deal which certainly has the appearance of teaching that the blessed peace of a union with Christ is to be the result of entire consecration. But we are here taught, not that we are to reach mercy as the result of the completeness of our consecration, but that, having realized mercy, we should yield ourselves in consecration to God. That union with the Lord Jesus must be given through the personal appropriation of the mercy of God in Him.

One ship turns east, and another west
With the selfsame winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales,
Which tells us the way to go.

Like the winds of the sea are the waves of fate,
As we voyage along through life;
'Tis the set of the soul which decides the goal,
And not the calm or the strife.

II.

The Consecration.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God."

It is not often that the idea of sacrifice is associated with the thought of mercy. We commonly view it as one of the obstacles to our belief in God's mercy. In all religions but one, men sacrifice to God when they think His mercy turned away; they sacrifice to avert His anger, to restore His smile. But there is one religion which inverts the order—the religion of Christ. All other faiths say, "Sacrifice that ye may win God's favour"; Christianity says, "Win God's favour that ye may sacrifice." All other faiths make sacrifice the root; Christianity makes sacrifice the flower.

It is the sacrifice of the body that St. Paul calls for. Let us look first at sacrifice, and secondly at the sacrifice of the body.

i. Sacrifice.

1. "*Making sacrifices.*"—We often speak of making sacrifices for Christ. That expression is not in the Bible. On the contrary, it rather runs against the true view of the subject — for it seems to limit sacrifice to particular acts, whereas the whole life is the sacrifice.

¶ Was there ever a time when there were so many *home-made* Christians as there are to-day, man-made, church-made Christians? Who does not know the recipe? Tie up the hands and say: "Sir, you must not do that." Tie up the feet and say: "You must not go to such and such places—at least, when you are at home." Gag the mouth, blind the eyes, stop the ears, and there is your

Christian: a creature with his heart hungering for the world as fiercely as ever, and whose only evidence of any earnestness is in a constant discussion as to whether there is any harm in a score of questionable or unquestionable things that he desires, and in the sincerity of his complaint that they are forbidden.[1]

¶ Dr. Stewart of Lovedale, his biographer tells us, could not endure the idea that missionaries were to be pitied for the sacrifices they made. A member of his staff says: "One incident will live in my memory for all time. It occurred in the course of a brief address he gave once at the weekly staff prayer-meeting in the large hall at Lovedale. Something that he had heard or read moved him to speak of the so-called sacrifices which men made when entering the mission-field. He flamed up at the idea, and spoke with a burning torrent of words which showed us—just for the moment—the liquid fires of devotion which he hid behind his reserve. As I write I can see, as though it were yesterday, that tall form swaying with noble passion: Sacrifice! What man or woman could speak of sacrifice in the face of Calvary? What happiness or ambition or refinement had any one 'given up' in the service of humanity to compare with the great sacrifice of Him who 'emptied himself and . . . took upon himself the form of a servant'? It made some of us feel rather ashamed of our heroics, for we knew that if ever a man since Livingstone had a right to speak like that it was Dr. Stewart."[2]

¶ Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! it is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a forgoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver and the soul to sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice.[3]

¶ People who make real sacrifices are never able to calculate self-complacently the good the said sacrifices are doing them; just as people who really grieve are unable at the time to philosophize about the good effects of grief.[4]

2. *True sacrifice.*—Have you ever seen a forester cutting down a great tree? It falls to earth, never to rise again; there will be

[1] M. G. Pearse.
[2] *Stewart of Lovedale*, 176.
[3] David Livingstone.
[4] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 435.

no more shade or beauty, no more glory of summer green or autumn gold. Is the tree wasted? No, it is sacrificed. One day a brave ship sails the seas; to build it the tree was sacrificed. One day God's church rises towards heaven; to form the roof the tree was sacrificed. Have you ever seen men quarrying stone? It is torn out of the quarry, and split and shattered, and carved and cut, and chiselled and hammered; one day we see the walls of a stately cathedral, and there is the stone which was sacrificed. You watch a sculptor carving the marble; the white fragments fall thickly, the marble wastes, but the beautiful image grows; it is not waste, but sacrifice. Was Mary's ointment wasted? No, the world has been sweeter for it ever since. Was Gordon's life wasted when he died at Khartoum, or Nelson's when he fell at Trafalgar? Many a devoted missionary, many brave men and delicate women have died of fever and savage torture, and the world says, To what purpose was this waste? But theirs was a sacrifice to win souls. To some people the crucifixion of our Master seems a waste of life; to the Church it is the great sacrifice, which taketh away the sins of the world. "He that loseth his life shall find it."

¶ Listen to the parable of the earth, as it lies far down beneath the blue heaven, or as in the cold night it looks up at the silver stars. "Here am I," it mutters, "so far away from Him who made me. The grass blades and the flowers lift up their heads and whisper to the breeze, the trees go far up into the golden sunshine, the birds fly up against the very heaven, the clouds are touched sometimes with glory as if they caught the splendour of the King, the stars are bright as if they shone with the light of His presence. And I am down here! How can I ever climb up to Him who made me?" And then the poor earth sighs again: "And that is not all—not even the worst of it. I am only dull soil, without any beauty of form, or richness of colour, or sweetness of smell! All things seem full of loveliness but me. How can I ever be turned into worth and blessedness?"

And now there comes the seed, and it is hidden in the earth. "Earth," whispers the seed, "wilt thou give me thy strength?"

"No, indeed," replies the earth; "why should I give thee my strength? It is all I have got, and I will keep it for myself."

"Then," saith the seed, "thou shalt be earth, and only earth, for ever and ever. But if thou wilt give me thy strength thou shalt be lifted into another life."

So the earth yields and gives up its strength to the seed And the seed takes hold of it and lifts it up and begins to turn it into a hundred forms of beauty; it rises with wondrous stem; it drinks in sunshine and rain and air, mingling them with the earth's strength and changing all to toughened branch or dainty leaf, to rich flower or ripened fruit. Then its work is done as it ends in the seed. And it cries to the earth: "Spake I not truly? Thou art not lost, but by sacrifice transformed to higher life, to worth and beauty."[1]

All the winter-time the wine gives joy
To those who else were dismal in the cold;
But the vine standeth out amid the frost;
And after all, hath only this grace left,
That it endures in long, lone steadfastness
The winter through:—and next year blooms again;
Not bitter for the torment undergone,
Not barren for the fulness yielded up;
As fair and fruitful towards the sacrifice
As if no touch had ever come to it
But the soft airs of heaven and dews of earth;—
And so fulfils itself in love once more.[2]

3. *The permanent value of sacrifice.*—Here lies the test by which we may try the fabric of our own actions. We have—have now and for ever—only that which we have offered to others and to God. Wherever the thought of self dominates in our schemes; wherever we identify the success of a cause, however noble, with our own success; wherever we determine for our own pleasure, as far as we can, the course of events great or small—there is the seed of ultimate corruption and decay and failure. The fatal harvest may be early or it may be late, but it is prolific and it is certain. That which is marked with the Cross has the pledge of permanence; that which bears the impress of self must perish.

¶ Sacrifice hallows what it touches. And under its hallowing touch values increase by long leaps and big bounds. Here is a fine opportunity for those who would increase the value of gifts that seem small in amount. Without stopping now for the philosophy of it, this is the tremendous fact. Perhaps the annual foreign missionary offering is being taken up in your church. The pastor has preached a special sermon, and it has caught fire

[1] M. G. Pearse. [2] Harriet E. H. King.

within you. You find yourself thinking as he preaches, and during the prayer following, "I believe I can easily make it fifty dollars this year. I gave thirty-five last time." You want to be careful *not* to make it fifty dollars, because you can do that *easily*. If you are shrewd to have your money count the most, you will pinch a bit somewhere and make it sixty-two fifty. For the extra amount that you pinch to give will hallow the original sum and increase its praetical value enormously. Sacrifice hallows what it touches, and the hallowing touch acts in geometrical proportion upon the value of the gift.[1]

ii. The Sacrifice of the Body.

"Present your bodies," says the Apostle. He does not say your "souls." We are very ready at times to say that we serve God in the spirit, though our deeds are somewhat mixed; and sometimes a man will do a wrong thing and admit that it is not quite right, but "my heart is right," he will say, "and God looks upon the heart." That is a kind of service that has no part or lot in Christ. A man who is trying to sever his body from his spirit, a man who thinks religion is merely a thing of the spirit and not of the outward life, a thing of the soul and not a thing of the body, is misreading the Gospel.

¶ It is a matter of great interest, and even awe, to me, to observe how the nobler feelings can exist in their intensity only where the whole nature, the lower too, is intense also; and how that which is in itself low and mean becomes sublimated into something that is celestial. Hence, in the highest natures I suppose goodness will be the result of tremendous struggle; just as the "bore," which is nothing in the Thames, becomes a convulsion on the Ganges, where the waters of a thousand miles roll like a sea to meet the incoming tide of the ocean.[2]

1. What was St. Paul's attitude to the body?

(1) *It was not the pagan attitude of worship.*—This attitude is perhaps best illustrated by the ancient Greeks. Their worship of the body took two forms—the worship of beauty and the worship of physical strength. Their worship of beauty is a commonplace to every one who knows anything whatever about the nation whose sculpture is the admiration and despair of later artists. With them the artistic feeling was not a luxury of the wealthy,

[1] S. D. Gordon. [2] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 215.

but was interwoven with the life of the whole people. The most beautiful women of Greece were as famous as its greatest men. Their worship of physical strength was shown especially by the place given to athletics in the great national festivals, such as the Olympian Games. These games were not a mere sporting meeting, but a sacred celebration. The winner was considered to reflect immortal glory upon the city which bare him. He returned home in triumphal procession; he received a distinction which might be compared to our conferring of the "freedom" of a city; a statue was erected in his honour; and sometimes his exploits were celebrated in the loftiest poetry. So essential a part of Greek life were these games that chronology was based upon them, the years being reckoned by Olympiads.

¶ To-day there is among us much of this old pagan worship. Witness the "religion of the ballet," the portraits of professional beauties in the shop windows, and the extolling of sensuous charms in much popular modern poetry. Witness, too, the exaggerated language that is used about the elevating influence of art; as though the salvation of society from sin and misery were in mere picture-galleries; as though the criminal classes would cease to be criminal if presented with season tickets for the Royal Academy. Nor can we deny the existence of a widespread worship of physical strength. In recent years we have seen the revival of the prize-fight and the canonization of St. Slavin. These be thy gods, O Israel. These are the heroes whose names stand first on the modern bead-roll of fame. And even health and innocent sports have been degraded by excessive admiration. Games which used to be played for amusement have now become partly a science and partly a trade.[1]

(2) *It was not the pseudo-Christian attitude*—that the body is the seat of all evil.—Heresy at Colosse took the form of hostility to the body as a physical organism. Some members of the Church there hated the body instead of the evil heart of unbelief, and so became ascetics, injuring the body and starving it. Hence St. Paul's rebuke of those things which "have a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." This tendency was developed still further under the monastic system. One man lived for fifty years in a subterranean cave, which was his way of

[1] H. W. Horwill.

hiding his light under a bushel. Some buried themselves up to the neck in the burning sands of the desert. Some slept on bundles of thorns. Some bound themselves to jump about on one leg. Another forced his body into the hoop of a cart wheel, and remained in that position for ten years. Another, Saint Simeon Stylites — the most conspicuous example of a man's making himself a fool for Christ's sake—is said to have kept himself alive for thirty years on the top of a column, and, when too weak to stand any longer upright, to have had a post erected on it to which he was fastened by chains. The monks of later days did not go to such extremes, though they wore hair clothes, and in many other ways developed considerable ingenuity in the manufacture of discomfort. In the Middle Ages there might have been seen on the Continent long processions of "Flagellants" travelling from country to country, weeping as they went, singing penitential hymns, and applying the scourge to their naked backs. And they found that all this did not destroy sin.

¶ This contempt for the body which St. Paul rebuked among the Colossians has not yet died out of the Church. We are constantly speaking about the value of souls, and forget sometimes that these souls are in bodies. How often we sneer at the body as though it were not worth attention! But great indeed is the mistake of those who think they glorify God by sneering at or maltreating the body, which is one of the noblest products of His skill. Would you compliment an inventor by destroying his machine, by pulling it to pieces either literally or metaphorically?[1]

¶ After dinner to the San Gregorio to see the frescoes, the "Martyrdom of St. Andrew," the rival frescoes of Guido and Domenichino, and afterwards drove about till dark, when we went to a most extraordinary performance—that of the Flagellants. I had heard of it, and had long been curious to assist at it. The church was dimly lit by a few candles on the altar, the congregation not numerous. There was a service, the people making responses, after which a priest, or one of the attendants of the church, went round with a bundle of whips of knotted cord, and gave one to each person who chose to take it. I took mine, but my companion laughed so at seeing me gravely accept the whip, that he was obliged to hide his face in his hands, and was passed over. In a few minutes the candles were extinguished, and we

[1] H. W. Horwill.

were left in total darkness. Then an invisible preacher began exhorting his hearers to whip themselves severely, and as he went on his vehemence and passion increased. Presently a loud smacking was heard all round the church, which continued a few minutes; then the preacher urged us to fresh exertions, and crack went the whips again louder and faster than before, as he exhorted. The faithful flogged till a bell rang; the whips stopped, in a few minutes the candles were lit again, and the priest came round and collected his cords. I had squeezed mine in my hands, so that he did not see it, and I brought it away with me. As soon as the candles were extinguished the doors were locked, so that nobody could go out or come in till the discipline was over. I was rather nervous when we were locked up in total darkness, but nobody whipped me, and I certainly did not whip myself. A more extraordinary thing (for sight it can't be called) I never witnessed. I don't think the people stripped, nor, if they did, that the cords could have hurt them much.[1]

¶ In regard to those atrocious scenes which formed the favourite Huron recreation of a summer night, the Jesuits, it must be confessed, did not quite come up to the requirements of modern sensibility. They were offended at them, it is true, and prevented them when they could; but they were wholly given to the saving of souls, and held the body in scorn, as the vile source of incalculable mischief, worthy the worst inflictions that could be put upon it. What were a few hours of suffering to an eternity of bliss or woe? If the victim were heathen, these brief pangs were but the faint prelude of an undying flame; and if a Christian, they were the fiery portal of Heaven. They might, indeed, be a blessing; since, accepted in atonement for sin, they would shorten the torments of Purgatory. Yet, while schooling themselves to despise the body, and all the pain or pleasure that pertained to it, the Fathers were emphatic on one point—it must not be eaten. In the matter of cannibalism, they were loud and vehement in invective.[2]

¶ The ideals of different races and centuries have no doubt been very different. With us cleanliness is next to godliness. With our ancestors it was the very reverse, and dearly they paid for their error, in plagues and black death. According to the Venerable Bede, St. Etheldreda was so holy that she rarely washed, except perhaps before some great festival of the Church; and Dean Stanley tells us in his *Memorials of Canterbury* that

[1] *The Greville Memoirs*, i. 396.

[2] Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America*, ii. 173.

after the assassination of Becket the bystanders were much impressed, for "the austerity of hair drawers, close fitted as they were to the bare flesh, had hitherto been unknown to English saints, and the marvel was increased by the sight—to our notions so revolting—of the innumerable vermin with which the haircloth abounded—boiling over with them, as one account describes it, like water in a simmering cauldron. At the dreadful sight all the enthusiasm of the previous night revived with double ardour. They looked at each other in silent wonder, then exclaimed, 'See! see what a true monk he was, and we knew it not,' and burst into alternate fits of weeping and laughter, between the sorrow of having lost such a head, and the joy of having found such a saint."[1]

¶ When Archbishop Whately was dying, his chaplain read to him the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and then quoted the words from the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 20–21): "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change *our vile body*," etc. The dying man was pained, and asked for "the right thing" to be read to him. The chaplain then repeated it again, with the rendering, with which we are now familiar in the Revised Version: "Who shall fashion anew *the body of our humiliation*." "That is right," said the Archbishop; "there is nothing vile which God has made."

(3) *It was the attitude of Christ.*—One of the greatest lessons of the Incarnation was the honour put by Christ upon the body by His living in it. Throughout His life He emphasized this regard for the body by such parables as that of the Good Samaritan, and by such miracles as that of the Feeding of the Multitudes. By the Apostles the figure of the body was used to show the connexion between Christ and His Church. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." In reading the Epistles of St. Paul, we are especially startled by the constant references to the importance of the body. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." "The body is for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." "Glorify God therefore in your body"—"and in your spirits" seems to have been added by some copyist, quite unnecessarily.

[1] Lord Avebury, *Peace and Happiness*, 41.

The reason why we should glorify God in our bodies is that we were bought with a price. "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" What a marvellous thought, that God is living in the world to-day in the bodies of Christians! But of all passages there is none more striking than our text. St. Paul has been devoting eleven chapters to the exposition of the story of the sin of man, the atonement of Christ, and all the blessings that follow. These eleven chapters are perhaps the noblest theological argument ever written. He then sums them all up, coming out of theory into practice, by saying "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present," not, as we should probably have expected, "your souls," or "your intellects," but "your bodies a living sacrifice."

¶ In 1899 a very important addition was made to our store of early liturgical documents by the publication of the Sacramentary of Bishop Serapion, which dates from 350 A.D. The work consists of thirty prayers such as a Bishop would be likely to use. Of these the first six and the last twelve have to do with the celebration of the Eucharist; the remainder relate to Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, and Burial. "Life is a remarkable note of the collection," and it is life in the fullest sense of the word. In the opening Offertory prayer we find the words, "We beseech thee, make us living men." At the invocation of the Word upon the elements, "Make all who communicate to receive a medicine of life for the healing of any sickness." In "the prayer for those who have suffered," "Grant health and soundness, and cheerfulness and all advancement of soul and body." And in the final Benediction, "Let the communion of the Body and Blood go with this people. Let their bodies be living bodies, and their souls be clean souls." Provision is also made for special prayer for the sick, and for the blessing of oils and waters for their benefit, and in these connexions we find such expressions as the following: "Be propitious, Master; assist and heal all that are sick. Rebuke the sicknesses." "Grant them to be counted worthy of health." "Make them to have perfect health of body and soul." "Grant healing power upon these creatures that every power and every evil spirit and every sickness may depart." It need scarcely be said that all these references to bodily wants are set in a context which is marked by the simplest and most ardent spiritual devotion. The physical is never allowed to usurp the first place. But it is never forgotten. The early Christians believed that the Life which was offered to

them in fellowship with their Lord was to extend to every part of their constitution, to "spirit and soul and body."[1]

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day,
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole."
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul."[2]

2. What, now, is to be the manner of the offering? The name that used to be applied to the burnt-offering was a very significant one. It meant the thing that went up—"that which ascends"; it never came down. So our offering is to be offered to God, and never taken back. This is brought out by the word used for "present." It really means that the thing is to be done once for all.

(1) To "present" or to "yield" is to cease to resist. That there may be a resistance, even in those who have been quickened by the Spirit, to the will of God, no believer who knows anything of his own heart can deny. This resistance is one of the main hindrances to the exercise of faith. It was so with Jacob at Peniel. "And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This passage in Jacob's history has a parallel in the life of many a child of God. How many can trace a similar crisis in God's dealings with them!

¶ It is the law in public and political life. A man entering the President's cabinet, as a secretary of some department, surrenders any divergent views he may have to those of his chief. With the largest freedom of thought that must always be where there are strong men, there must of necessity be one dominant will if the administration is to be a powerful one. It is the law of commercial life. The man entering the employ of a bank, a manufacturing concern, a corporation of any sort, in whatever capacity, enters to do the will of somebody else. Always there must be one dominant will if there is to be power and success.[3]

(2) But yielding means also ceasing to withhold. "My son, give me thine heart." In other words, let God have full possession, not only of the spirit and the soul, but of all your physical powers Yield every member up to Him.

[1] A. W. Robinson, *The Voice of Joy and Health*, 220.
[2] Browning, *Rabbi ben Ezra*.
[3] S. D. Gordon.

¶ All misuse of the body is not of vulgar vice, the kind of thing which is soul-murder, and which declares its character openly and visibly. There is a subtler misuse. There is a way of living which gives increasing concern to the incidentals of life, which spends itself for comfort; for comfort which may be quite of a refined kind, but which, because it is raised into an essential, instead of relegated to an inconsequent and incidental matter, is unutterably vicious. It is keen on luxuries and pleasures that are not sin in themselves, but, unless they are kept in minor place, are utterly and fatally deadening. "Pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease," these deaden the spirit; they make the ears deaf too, and the hands unready for the needs of the world and the claims of God. Be on your guard. What is ailing with many of us is that we are too fatally comfortable. It is sucking out the better life of us. "How could I fail to win?" said Frederick the Great, after the battle of Rosbach. "Soubrise had seven cooks and one spy; I had seven spies and one cook." The remark has a wide application. Watch the proportion of things. Life is a battle which has a way of hanging on to the proportions a man preserves between the commissariat and the intelligence departments; between his cooks and his sentries. "What I say unto one, I say unto you all—Watch."[1]

(3) And again, yielding also means ceasing to struggle. It means no longer trying to keep oneself up—putting forth vigorous efforts to keep oneself from sinking—but casting all upon Him who is able to keep us from falling.

¶ It is indeed a life of self-denial this, and I feel as if now for the first time I had even a dim view of what it is to be not one's own, to me a heart-rending lesson, a long and bitter lesson, one I would gladly exchange for fasting, or scourging, or what asceticism you will. Let me keep my own will, let me be my own, aim at my own idea of holiness, aid myself with my own props, and I would do most things. But this is the hard thing to learn, that in *everything*, from this moment for ever, I am not only not to get my own will, but I am to desire not to get my own will, to will to be controlled by another wholly and unceasingly. This has to me at times all the pain of dissolution. It is indeed a dying to this world.

> Death ends indeed the cares of life,
> Yet shudders life when death comes near,
> And such the fond heart's death-like strife
> When first the loved one does appear.

[1] T. Yates, *Sculptors of Life*, 108.

For, where true love is wakened, dies
The tyrant *self*, that despot dark.
Rejoice then that in death he lies,
And breathe morn's free air, with the lark.[1]

3. And what is the nature of the offering? In the old time the bodies offered in sacrifice were those of bulls and goats—not men, but possessions of men. That order of sacrifice had now passed away, since One had come who had borne our sins in His own body on the fatal tree; and in His doing of the will of God we had been hallowed by the offering of His body once for all. But sacrifice itself had not therefore passed away from among mankind. A riper and more complete form of sacrifice had succeeded, no longer of our possessions only, but of our very selves. But it is a living sacrifice. In this there is no contradiction. We sometimes fancy that sacrifice must needs involve death, or at least suppression. But it is not so. True sacrifice involves that utter offering of which death is the complete fulfilment. But this sacrifice of the will is not always executed in act. The sacrifice of Abraham was a true sacrifice, though Isaac was given back to him in life. The presenting, as St. Paul calls it, of Isaac was already complete; faith had already done its work. But when we present our very selves to God as a living sacrifice, alive with a new life, displacing the old sinful semblance of life which works only destruction, then by that same act we present our members to God as ready instruments of His righteousness. But this could not be if in sacrificing ourselves we always slew ourselves. The surrender of life to God is complete, but His will most commonly is to give us back the surrendered life as life from the dead.

(1) *The sacrifice is to be a living sacrifice.*—And since our sacrifice is to be a "living sacrifice"—something that has life in it, and not a thing which has lost its life or had its life taken away—we are not to wait till we are dead or nearly dead, we are not to wait till the infirmities of old age come upon us, or till the withering hand of sickness or of disease lays hold of us, before we give ourselves to God. Our life, the best of our life—the health, strength, and vigour of manhood—are to be given to Him. Why cannot there be a holy alliance between the

[1] *Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, 103.

athlete and the Christian? an alliance against the common enemies of both—against intemperance, and indolence, and dissipation, and effeminacy, and æsthetic voluptuousness, and heartless cynicism, and all the unnatural and demoralizing elements in our modern life? Why will some take so narrow a view of the true aims of physical training that they bound their horizon by the vision of prizes and athletic honours, not seeing that in themselves and by themselves these things are as worldly and as worthless as unsanctified wealth, or knowledge, or literature, or art? Why will others, again, who would not willingly break any of God's commandments, who would not pass a day without prayer, who believe and trust in a risen Saviour—why will they not regard sedentary habits, and softness of living, and feebleness which might have been strength, and delicacy which might have been hardihood, as physical sins? Why will they not devote to the service of the Kingdom of heaven blood as pure, limbs as supple, condition as fit, energies as buoyant as if they were aspirants for a championship, and thus help to refute the slander that religion is a feeble emasculated thing, good enough for sick-beds, and minor tones, and solemn functions, and gentle counsel, but out of place amid the strong rough work and the more manly joys of life?

¶ Quintin Hogg, the founder of the Polytechnic Institute of London, put a large fortune into the accomplishment of his work, but laid down something besides that was worth more than a fortune. "Mr. Hogg," some one said to him once, "how much does it cost to build up an institute like yours?" "Only one man's life-blood," was his reply.[1]

(2) *The sacrifice is holy.*—The original, the first, the primary significance of that word "holy" is *devoted.* The consecrated life is a life of utter devotion. That means many things. It means separation from the world, for one thing. But the positive point is that it means God first, God last, God everywhere, God as the spring of thought and word and deed, God as the ruling power of our whole being; we are devoted utterly to God, every bit of our life is stamped with the hallmark of devotion to Christ.

¶ A few years ago I crossed from Fife to Hamburg in a coal-cargo steamer, English-built, but trading under the Swedish flag,

[1] R. E. Speer.

the s.s. *Zelos*. My wife and I were given the Captain's room—a long commodious cabin. One night I chanced to notice certain words cut in one of the iron beams overhead. These were: "Certified for the accommodation of the master."[1]

(3) *The sacrifice is acceptable.*—This condition embraces both the others, but goes beyond them. All men who ever offered sacrifice, unless it were in hypocrisy or by mere custom, offered it as well-pleasing to the god of their worship. But why they wished to please their god was another matter; their wish might come from this or that of a whole range of paltry, or indifferent, or lofty motives. Accordingly St. Paul, knowing well the false thoughts of sacrifice which spring up naturally in men's hearts, has left no room for them in his exhortation. Against one false thought of sacrifice he has set the need that it be living; against another he has provided by refusing to recognize a sacrifice which, though living, is not kept holy. But the universal thought of pleasing God has a truth of its own which may not without peril be forgotten. The livingness, the holiness are in themselves well-pleasing to God; yet it is possible, strange and contradictory as it may seem, for men to make the sacrifices, and to be careful about them in both these respects, to speak much and act much on the belief that sacrifice and life and holiness are truly great things, and yet to forget God Himself. But when this happens, the whole meaning of sacrifice is lost. "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength" remains the first and great commandment. The Christian desire of well-pleasing has nothing to do with the hope of gain or the fear of suffering, but is that desire of well-pleasing which belongs to love and love alone. The supreme value of sacrifice springs from the yearning of God's children on earth for their Father in heaven.

¶ I cannot get out of my mind, when I read these words, the figure of a consecrated knighthood. Christians are to be the chosen knights of the Lord's table, the representatives and embodiments of true Christian chivalry. This, with higher and more glorious relationships, is the true conception of the Church. Every member of the Christian Church is a knight of King Jesu's table, a member of an elect company, elected to special devotion and unceasing service. This is not always the ideal conception

[1] W. Christie.

which prevails in the Christian Church. There are unworthy conceptions of membership. There is what I may call the *book* conception. It is thought sufficient to have the name on the roll. I know that the Scriptures mention with great honour those "whose names are written in the Book of Life." Ay, but these are the names of the alive, and they are enrolled because of the surrender of their life to the service of their King. The one is a mere label, and might mean anything. This name is written with one's own blood. And there is what I may call the *couch* conception. It is not openly expressed, but tacitly implied. The member who embodies this conception sits and reclines, and thinks it enough to feel happy! The wind that roars outside the house constrains him to draw his couch nearer the fire. He does not regard the tempest as a call to service, but as an incitement to more coddling ease. Sometimes the couch conception deteriorates into the *stretcher* conception! And by this I mean that the member of the Church not only reclines, but expects to be carried by the more faithful few. And there is the *leech* conception. This type of membership reveals itself in constant grasping. The hand is opened only to take, and never to give. It is greedy for comfort, for attention, for visitation. It never opens its veins and lets out blood; it knows nothing about sacrifice. And because all these conceptions are so prevalent the Church is the victim of perilous weakness. "Some are sickly, and not a few asleep." And therefore the Church is sometimes like an infirmary, and sometimes like a sleeping compartment—anything rather than a gathering-place of armed knights, pledged to be true unto death, and ready to go forth in living sacrifice to serve the King in fighting the gathered hosts of the devil.[1]

¶ In the guest book of a friend I saw recently a few lines written by Dr. John Willis Baer, in which he said, quoting from another—

God gave Himself for us,
God gave Himself to us,
God wants to give Himself through us.[2]

III.

The Part which Reason Plays.

"Which is your reasonable service."

1. It is natural to suppose, at first sight, and indeed the explanation is given by many expositors, that the word "reasonable" here

[1] J. H. Jowett. [2] J. W. Chapman.

means that it is not an unreasonable thing, but on the contrary proper and becoming, that we should present our bodies unto God. That is true, but it is not the meaning of the word in this verse. The word rendered "reasonable" here occurs only once besides in the New Testament, and there it is translated "spiritual." It means what belongs to the reason, and appertains to the mind, to the intellect and thought, not to any external or ceremonial law. Hence reasonable service means the service of reason, the service of mind. The reason of man is the priest that lays the body on the altar. The mind or will expresses its devotion by surrendering the body to God.

¶ The powers of reason are required to determine what acts would be acts of rightful sacrifice and worship. Simple obedience to the precepts of the ceremonial law or tradition had once been a sufficient guide, but henceforth sacrifice was to be bound up with the new and glorious responsibilities which belong to knowledge.[1]

2. The word "service," too, is somewhat ambiguous. It does not here mean service in the sense of ministering to the wants and obeying the commands of a master, but service in the sense in which we use the word when we speak of "Divine service." When the word service is used in a Scriptural sense, it means the service of worship; and reasonable service will therefore mean the worship of mind—the worship of thought, intellect, a worshipping mind approaching God. "I beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice, which is the worship of your minds." If that is the meaning, and there cannot be much doubt that it is, the expression "reasonable service" seems to stand in contrast to the word "body" in the middle of the verse—"to present your bodies." What you present is the body, but it is the worship of your mind. It is as much as to say, on the one hand, that no act done by the body is worship, is service, is acceptable unto the Lord, unless accompanied by an act of mind—an act of thought. God cannot be pleased with an external act, unless that external act represents an internal resolve, an internal desire, an internal act. There must be presentation of the body to perfect the worship of the mind. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

[1] F. J. A. Hort.

In Fashion or in Favour.

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In Fashion or in Favour.

Be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Rom. xii. 2.

1. The great aim of St. Paul in the first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans is to convince his readers that men of no race or class, whether Jews or Gentiles, can claim eternal life on the ground of their own merits, but, in order to receive it, must be content to accept it humbly and thankfully from the grace of God. His own summary of his whole argument is. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." To this mercy or grace he traces the calling, the election, the justification, the sanctification, the peace, the joys, the hopes, and, in a word, all the blessings shown by him to be included in the portion of a Christian. These glorious privileges are all mercies, pure mercies of God.

From the commencement of the twelfth chapter to the close of his Epistle we find the Apostle presenting those mercies, the nature and fulness of which he had previously unfolded in doctrine, as motives to Christian activity. They do not produce the effect which they ought to have if they do not produce righteous and holy living. It is accordingly on the valid foundation which these mercies supply that the Apostle raises his practical exhortations.

2. St. Paul addresses men here on the hypothesis that in some sense or other they are responsible for their surroundings. He says: "Be not conformed to this world." He would not have us for a moment listen to this suggestion of a necessity. "Be not." He speaks as to people who make their own circumstances for themselves. And yet, in fact, the freedom of our will does not

lie in any power to create or to fashion circumstances or facts or motives outside ourselves; our will has none of that properly creative or constructive power, but what it can do is to select among the actual facts and motives which lie in our circumstances already. Our freedom lies in selecting, in paying attention to, this or that element in our actual surroundings, and by thus attending to it we have the power to give it such predominant force that all the other elements in our surroundings sink by the side of it into insignificance. Thus, in fact, men can do what in effect comes to making their own surroundings.

¶ In this London of ours there are the same surroundings for all of us, and, for the most part, they are ugly enough, grimy enough, in our atmosphere; but the artistic spirit selects, it looks to those particular buildings where it can find something which will gratify its sense of form. As the man of artistic sensibility walks up Whitehall he looks not to all the buildings indiscriminately. He selects and distinguishes the Banqueting Hall on his right. He loves its form. It is something which responds to his sense of beauty and of fitness. As he gets to the top of Whitehall he selects and distinguishes that one statue of incomparable beauty which is the distinction of London—Le Sueur's statue of Charles I. Under the grime with which the London atmosphere has incrusted it, his eye can distinguish the lines of beauty and the majestic pose of the beautiful figure and the horse. A little farther and his imagination penetrates through the walls of the National Gallery and recalls those countless forms of beauty and of grace which have already passed into his memory from the pictures of Flemish or Italian or English School. He selects, and, by selecting, makes his own atmosphere.

So he knows what are the special glories of the sunset as it slopes along the Serpentine, what are the extraordinary beauties of the low and lurid lights which are always to be found as he walks along the Thames Embankment by day or by night. The artistic temperament selects; by selecting it attends to particular objects; it is not indiscriminate; it takes what it chooses. Thus it makes its own environment, and though it moves, in fact, among exactly the same multitudinal and thronging objects amidst which we all move, it makes its own world by that incomparable power which is possessed by the human will, of attending to what it pleases and, by attending to it, giving it the predominant force which makes that real and all the rest of little account.

And so it is with the religious man. He creates his

atmosphere by what he attends to. He penetrates behind the show and glamour of the world, back to what lies behind.[1]

The question which St. Paul invites the Christians in Rome to decide is whether they ought to be in fashion with the world or in favour with God. He urges them not to be "fashioned according to this world," but to be "transformed" or transfigured, *i.e.* changed from the figure or fashion of things belonging to the world into likeness to Christ. In that way they will be in harmony with God's will, and will discover how good God is.

Thus we may separate the good advice of the Apostle into three parts, and ask—

I. What is meant by being fashioned according to this world?

II. What is meant by being transformed by the renewing of the mind?

III. What is meant by proving that God's will is good and acceptable and perfect?

I.

Fashioned according to this World.

i. Fashion.

1. It is a custom of St. Paul to make a distinction between the "form" of a thing, which really and necessarily belongs to it, and the "fashion," which is only a matter of outward seeming, or at best is subject to change; and so it is misleading here to talk of being "conformed" or "transformed," when St. Paul speaks of only the good thing as a "form," and of the bad one as a mere "fashion." In another Epistle he says, "The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31); here he reminds us that it is a passing thing, by the mere use of the word "fashion."

2. This very fact, that "the fashion of this world" is changeable and uncertain, makes it harder to give definite rules as to the way to avoid being "fashioned according to this world." St. Paul does not attempt to do so; he does not say, "Such and such talk, such and such employments, such and such pleasures are

[1] Bishop Gore.

worldly: therefore the servants of God must avoid them"; but he gives us the warning against accommodating ourselves to the fashion, whatever it be, of this world. That warning holds good however the fashion may change.

¶ Our English virtues and vices would seem at times to go in and out of fashion like our wearing apparel. Up to the time, say, of William Cobbett, contentment was accounted a virtue in an Englishman and enthusiasm a vice. To Hume or Gibbon the words "discontented enthusiast" would have suggested a repulsive and seditious personality of the Czolgosz type—or, at least, some contemptible Ranter or Shaker. It is curious to reflect how matters altered later on when the Divine duty of discontent came openly to be preached, and Besant and Rice's "Dick Mortiboy" impressed upon the school-feast children that unless your station in life was already among the great ones of the earth it was a despicable thing therewith to be content.[1]

¶ Another virtue, charity or philanthropy, seems to have fluctuated in favour. In *The Moonstone*, Mr. Murthwaite, suggesting Godfrey Ablewhite as the possible culprit, observes, "I am told that he is a great philanthropist—which is decidedly against him to begin with." Mr. Brough, the worthy family solicitor, cordially agreed with this, and it is pretty obvious that Wilkie Collins himself agreed with them both. *The Moonstone* was of course written long before charitable "slumming" came into fashion. Society philanthropists are always liable to offend by self-advertisement and the airs they give themselves of standing *in loco Dei* to the poor.

> But the good bishop with a meeker air
> Admits, and leaves them, Providence's care.

Pope's bishop was no doubt a worse man, but he avoided this particular rock of offence.[2]

3. "The last new fashion." There is something inherently contemptuous in the phrase. When we say of anything that it "has become a fashion," we almost mean it to be inferred that it has become so for no particularly good reason, and will probably some day cease to be so for some reason no better. Ever since the word came to be applied in our language to men's customs or whims, it has absorbed that other idea of change, and therefore

[1] *Recreations and Reflections* (from "The Saturday Review"), 373.
[2] *Ib.*, 377.

of comparative worthlessness. Now there is nothing intrinsically worthless or wrong in mere change, or in the substitution of one "fashion" for another. In things into which the moral element does not enter, there is no harm in fashion, but obviously much good. Take the most obvious, because vulgarest, use of the term, as applied to dress. Into this "fashion," as into everything human, the evil will, the low morality of man can intrude. Ostentation, extravagance, self-indulgence, vulgar and reckless competition in all these things must, and do, intrude. But the love of beauty, of variety, in colour and form, is not base or worldly love. It should not shame us to find pleasure in letting the eye rest upon such things, which like all God's gifts are seen and loved first as we gaze upon the faultless beauties and the everchanging beauties of His creation. That the eye, given us to perceive and rejoice in these beauties, should long for an ever-changing succession of them, should discern the loveliness of alternation and variety, is no disgrace. Change, transition, contrast, whether in Nature or in Art—how large a part do not these make in the beauty of God's creation, and of that human art which has grown out of the study of that creation! Should we not be grateful for the "shifting fashions"—for so they are—of God's world, for the shifting fashions of the landscape in winter and in summer, in spring and in autumn?

¶ Robertson had seen a great deal of the fashionable society of watering-places. With the exception of the brief interludes of Oxford and Winchester, he had lived all his days in such places. By the world generally he would himself be regarded as a man of fashion. He himself keenly appreciated the social and intellectual side of such society. But he had a thorough suspicion and dislike of the essential characteristics of these places. This comes out in his sermons and also in his letters: "If you wish to know what hollowness and heartlessness are, you must seek for them in the world of light, elegant, superficial fashion, where frivolity has turned the heart into a rock-bed of selfishness. Say what men will of the heartlessness of trade, it is nothing compared with the heartlessness of fashion. Say what they will of the atheism of science, it is nothing to the atheism of that round of pleasure in which many a heart lives—dead while it lives."[1]

4. There are fashions in morals as well as in art, in religion,

[1] F. Arnold, *Robertson of Brighton*, 224.

even, as well as in social etiquette; and it is against these that St. Paul warns his Roman Christians. Whenever and wherever the shifting moral sense of Society forms its own rules and standards, without reference to the revelation of God in His Word, and in His Son Jesus Christ, these fashions take their rise—the creations of the world—with no assurance of permanence, because they depend ultimately upon the conscience of the hour, which must needs vary. This must be true of every age—of this age no less than of that of which the Apostle was writing. It is to the conscience of the hour that we are not to "conform," or "be fashioned," if only because it has no permanence. There is no security, even if it is decently moral to-day, that it will be the same to-morrow.

¶ The relations of the Kingdom of heaven and the world have grown infinitely more complex since St. Paul's day. When he wrote, the boundary line between the Church and the World was tolerably clear and defined. It is no longer so, and the World presents new fronts to the Church, or rather is so permeated by the ways, if not the spirit, of the Church, that its fashions have become both more complex and more alluring. Now the World has become leavened to a certain extent by the ethics of the Church, and the Church leavened, alas! by the lower morals of the World, so that the boundary lines between the two become fainter and more misleading. And the pressure of the World upon the Church is greater than it was in St. Paul's day, because it touches it at a greater number of points. The fashion of the World seriously threatened the real Christians in Rome; but it now threatens in a thousand fresh ways the nominal Christians of to-day.

¶ "Fashion," as a term, has degraded since St. Paul's day. Unreality, as well as instability, is inseparable from the name of "fashion." "Why does such and such a man or woman do so and so?" "Oh, because it's the fashion—because it's the thing to do!" Fashion is the public opinion of the "set," to which everything else is sacrificed. The tyranny of the "set"—how inflexible its grip! what evils has it not to answer for! The *vox populi*, even when it is that of the large, free, public conscience, has no security for being the *vox Dei*; but how when it is the voice of a sect or a clique? To be really cynical is a bad enough thing—an affront to God and an insult to the law of Christian love; but what shall we say of the cynical fashion, taken up because for the moment, and with certain people we admire, it is

the sign of cleverness and distinction. Then there is the sceptical fashion. To refuse God's revelation, in Nature and in Conscience and in His Word, is sad enough; it is matter for deep pity as well as reproach. But what shall we say when it too has no root at all, good or evil, but is taken up as a badge of enlightenment, as a mark of separation from the humdrum superstitions of the world, and to win the good opinion of those in whom the same scepticism is perhaps at least genuine?

Terrible, again, is the growing defiance of the accepted moralities and decorums—the custom-hallowed decencies and reticences of life—which we see everywhere about us. Everywhere do we see signs of this revolt against old ideas of reverence, of modesty, of charity, and of courtesy, under the pretence of protesting against whatever is unreal or hypocritical in the so-called "respectabilities" of life. Where this is a genuine revolt, having a supposed excuse in undoubted conventionalities and hypocrisies to be found among us, it is at least not ignoble; but for one person who is fired by a genuine indignation that overmasters him, how many are there who follow in the same track only to win credit for the same thing, or even, must we not say, because the laxer morality, the reduced stringency, is easier and pleasanter?

These and a thousand other fashions and follies are all around us. The satirists of the day know these things well. The world is keenly alive to its own weak points. But satire has no power to cure them, has no "healing in its wings." For satire treats symptoms only, and no wise physician is content with this. It was one of Pope's half-truths that

> Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

But "hated" is just the wrong word here. To see the hatefulness of a thing and to hate it are quite different stages of moral growth. To hate is the correlative of to love; and when we have once begun to hate the evil that is in the world, we have also begun to hate the evil that is in ourselves, and our deliverance is at hand.[1]

¶ In the department of the "minor morals" various little changes of fashion are observable. The change in the drinking habits of society is too hackneyed a topic to be more than mentioned, but if we are not mistaken, a striking change has taken place in the matter of "strong language." It is quite true that "damns had their day" once—and it is equally certain that they

[1] Alfred Ainger.

are having another one now. Twenty years ago when one was sitting in the stalls it was not unusual, when the obnoxious word was uttered, to hear materfamilias let fall some such remark as, "I really do think he might have left that out!" Nowadays of course it passes absolutely unnoticed; nor does any man in telling a story think it necessary to omit the word, if it comes in naturally, because of the presence of women-folk. Nay, we appeal to our readers whether they do not hear it, more or less in play, from the lips of beauty in distress—in a bunker or elsewhere. *Nous ne discutons pas—nous constatons.* We merely remark that the mothers of this generation would not have done it any more than they would have smoked cigarettes.[1]

¶ "One day," says Madame de Hausset, in her curious memoirs of the Pompadour, "Madame said to the Duc d'Ayen that M. de Choiseul was very fond of his sisters. 'I know it, Madame,' said he—'and many sisters are the better for it.' 'What can you mean?' she asked. 'Why,' he answered, 'as the Duc de Choiseul loves his sisters, it is thought fashionable to do the same; and I know silly girls, whose brothers formerly cared nothing for them, who are now most tenderly beloved. No sooner does their little finger ache than their brothers are running all over Paris to fetch the doctor for them. They flatter themselves that some one will say in M. de Choiseul's drawing-room, "Ah, what a good brother is M. de ——!" and that they will gain advancement thereby.'" We need scarcely add that the Duc de Choiseul was chief minister, and the dispenser of royal favours.[2]

ii. This World.

1. The marginal reference here gives "age" as an alternative reading for "world"—"be not fashioned according to the age or time"—and it should not be overlooked that the Greek word, here rendered "world," does really mean the world in special relation to time as distinguished from place or space. The changing forms or fashions to which the Apostle here refers are those which essentially belong to changes incident to time, the suppressed contrast being, of course, with a heavenly order, which is eternal. The idea is not necessarily theological: we are quite accustomed to the thought as a necessary consequent on our observations of life and history, and of the changes which every

[1] *Recreations and Reflections*, 377.
[2] J. H. Friswell, *This Wicked World*, 56.

careful watcher of life must needs note in other people and even in himself.

The "Time-Spirit"—the "Zeit-Geist"—is naturalized among us as a phrase to indicate the force which we see to be exercised, however little able we are to grasp and analyse it, in each succeeding epoch of our history; and it is clearly something after the same kind that St. Paul saw to be at work in the world of his day. And because his beloved converts must needs be in daily touch with the world, though it was their first duty and privilege to be not "of it," he had seen how necessary it was to them to beware of the subtle power, the alluring and plausible charm, which it was certain to exercise over them, unless they were forewarned and forearmed.

2. When St. Paul lifted up his voice against the world, and besought the Christians committed to his charge to be separate from it, he was thinking of that imposing paganism which was ever fronting them. With its love of pleasure, its glorification of power, its imperial pageantry, its idolatrous temples, its unredeemed Art, its seduction both for the senses and for the intellect, paganism cast its glamour over the new Christian converts. Writers so far apart as Cardinal Newman in his *Callista* and the author of *Quo Vadis* suggest to our minds the fascinating atmosphere into which Christianity was born, and where in its youth it had to fight the good fight of faith. Beneath the beauty of form and colour, the magnificence of ceremonies and arms, the arts and riches of civilization, that was an unclean and leprous world. Whether they lived in Corinth, with its unblushing worship of lust, or in Rome, which was the moral sewer of the world, or in Ephesus, where Christians were tempted by the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, or in Pergamos, where there were those who held the abominable doctrine of Balaam, or in Thyatira, where Jezebel seduced God's servants, or in Sardis, where only a few had not defiled their garments, Christians had ever to stand on guard. No wonder that some in Corinth had fallen through the lures of the flesh, or that a Demas had forsaken the faith before that imperial magnificence. Christians had to choose between their Lord and their world, and it was a world hard to escape or to resist.

3. It is evident that the world of to-day has changed, and it is unreasonable to require of modern Christians the line of action which was necessary in the first century. The spirit of Christ has counted for something during nineteen centuries, and Western society is not arrayed in arrogant hostility to the claims and ethics of our Master. His disciples are neither persecuted nor seduced after the fashion of the former days, and it is not necessary to preach that separation which once was compulsory, or to warn against the gross temptations which once beset the disciple from street and temple, from book and Art. Religious writers have shown a want of historical insight in adopting those fiery denunciations of the world which applied to the Corinth of St. Paul and the Rome of Juvenal. But this does not mean that there is no anti-Christian world or that Christians have not need to watch and pray; it only means that war has changed its form, and instead of the clash of swords we have the unseen danger of the rifle. We have to get to the principle which underlies all forms, and what constitutes the world in every age is devotion to the material instead of to the spiritual.

¶ Preachers may talk with airy rhetoric about the distinction between the Church and the World; but we feel, somehow, that the lines of division tend to melt away before our eyes. We cannot draw sharp lines of separation. Men may try, they have often tried, to do so in one way or another. They may wear, like Quakers, a peculiar dress, or they may ticket certain forms of amusement as "worldly," or they may use a peculiar phraseology; but experience tells us how ludicrous and disastrous such attempts have been, to what hypocrisies and absurdities they lead. The very expression, common enough once, still occasionally appears in newspapers, the "religious world"—how unreal it sounds! No, if we are to choose between the "religious world" and the "world" without a prefix, we must frankly prefer the latter.[1]

4. A man does not cease to be unworldly by adopting a ritual of renunciation any more than a Bushman becomes a European by washing off his grease and ochre, and attiring himself in clean linen and broadcloth. The casual gossip of the cloister may show that society and the petty interests of the butterfly crowd loom as large as ever in the imagination of its inmates. The unconscious leanings of an evangelical home ruled by the straitest

[1] H. R. Gamble.

maxims may show that the silly, senseless world finds a tell-tale mirror there. The trivialities of life, upon which the back has been ostensibly turned, cling like burrs to the textures of the inner man. Honest unworldliness is central to a man's scheme of thought, and begins far down below the surface. We cannot bind it upon men by artificial precepts.

¶ Are saints to be distinguished as men and women to whom everyday concerns offer no sort of attraction? Is their attitude towards civilization, and art, and business, and amusement that of unconcern or even of disdain? Are they to be recognized by differences of dress, or manner of speaking, from others around them? If so, Brother Lawrence in his kitchen, and Santa Zita going about her work as a housemaid, and even St. Paul weaving cloth for his tents, cannot properly be described as saints.[1]

(1) If any one is indulging in what the Prayer-Book calls "notorious sin," *i.e.* sin of which no Christian can doubt that it is serious and deadly sin; if he is a scorner of God, or of his parents, a blasphemer, a fornicator, a thief, a slanderer, a liar; he must know at once, without further question, that he is "fashioned according to this world."

¶ A story is told of Dr. Guthrie, that, finding a little girl weeping in great distress in Edinburgh, he, pitying her, asked the reason, and discovered that she had lost sixpence. The Doctor not only supplied the money, but took the child to a baker, not far from the spot, to buy a loaf for her. "That little girl," said the baker, "seems always to be losing sixpences, Doctor; perhaps it is her trade." And so it was. The poor little lassie had been brought up in a "padding ken," or a "fencing crib," a school for young thieves; and her peculiar vocation was to take her walks abroad, drop a pretended sixpence, and burst into uncontrollable weeping. The best of the story is that Doctor Guthrie, bending down, told the child that she was now more than ever an object of pity, since she earned her living by sin, and, finding out where she dwelt, he rescued her from her terrible position.[2]

(2) But, apart from open or notorious sin, if a man's heart is so set upon anything here in this present life that the thought of the world to come is unpleasant and irksome to him, he may be said to be fashioned according to this world. When a man is

[1] A. W. Robinson, *The Voice of Joy and Health*, 105.

[2] J. H. Friswell, *This Wicked World*, 14.

so entirely taken up with his property, pursuits, schemes, and employments in this world, innocent though they may be and useful in themselves, that he is more in earnest about them than about his devotions and the preparation of his soul for death, such a man has much need to watch and pray that he enter not into temptation; to pray that he may pray better, lest by little and little he fall away, and become a thorough child of this world, before he is aware.

¶ St. Benedict, so the old story ran, was sitting in his cell, meditating upon heaven, when suddenly the glory of this world was presented to his gaze, gathered, as it seemed, into a single dazzling and bewitching beam. But the appeal was made in vain to a heart that had dwelt among the celestial realities. *Inspexit et despexit*—"he saw and he scorned it." Was that altogether un-Christlike? Did not He also turn aside with something of loathing from the vision of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them? Did He not say, "I have overcome the world"? Was not His Apostle led by His Spirit when he declared that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"? And were not all of us called upon to "renounce" the world before we were enrolled as His disciples?[1]

(3) Again, we may be sure the world is getting or keeping too much hold of us, when we cannot bear being scorned or ridiculed for doing what we know in our heart to be right. This is especially a temptation of the world, because it is a temptation from our fellow-mortals, not from Satan, and because it is so entirely *without* a man.

¶ Some time ago, at the close of a meeting, a young man remained behind, and after the way of salvation was explained, he was urged to decide for Christ. His answer was, "I dare not," and the reason he gave was that he would be the only Christian in the workshop, and he dreaded the taunts and laughter of his workmates, and so he turned away from Christ for fear of a laugh. How different was the conduct of the young recruit—a lad of eighteen years of age—who stood as bravely as any Christian hero ever did. For two or three weeks he was the butt of the camp because he knelt and said his prayers, and testified for his Master. At length his company was ordered to the seat of war, and the battle came, and after a fierce fight the dead body of the young Christian was carried back, and the

[1] A. W. Robinson, *The Voice of Joy and Health*, 112.

ringleader of his persecutors said, "Boys, I couldn't leave him. He fought so bravely that I thought he deserved a decent burial." And as they dug a grave and buried him, a comrade cut his name and regiment on a piece of board, and another added, "I guess you'd better put in the words 'Christian Soldier'; he deserves it, and it may console him for all our abuse." That is the courage we want. The courage that "hates the cowardice of doing wrong," as Milton magnificently puts it, and the daring that stands unmoved amid scorn and obloquy. If you want to see that courage at its best, then look at Christ, and listen to these words of the Apostle, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."[1]

II.

Transformed by the Renewing of the Mind.

1. The word *transform* occurs elsewhere in the New Testament on two occasions. It is the word used to denote our Lord's Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 2; Mark ix. 2); and it is the word employed by St. Paul to describe that growing conformity to the likeness of our Lord, which results from the contemplation of His excellency: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed"—transformed or transfigured—"into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

2. "A transfigured life" suggests to us, in the light of the Lord's Transfiguration, even nobler and loftier aspirations and hopes than the phrase "a transformed life." And there lie in it and in the context such thoughts as these: the inward life, if it is healthy and true and strong, will certainly shape the outward conduct and character. Just as truly as the physical life moulds the infant's limbs, just as truly as every periwinkle shell on the beach is shaped into the convolutions that will fit the inhabitant by the power of the life that lies within, so the renewed mind will make a fit dwelling for itself.

¶ To a large extent a man's spirit shapes his body; within limits, of course, but to a very large and real extent. Did you never see some homely face, perhaps of some pallid invalid, which

[1] J. E. Roberts.

had in it the very radiance of heaven, and of which it might be said without exaggeration that it was "as it had been the face of an angel"? Did you never see goodness making men and women beautiful? Did you never see some noble emotion stamp its own nobility on the countenance, and seem to dilate a man's very form and figure, and make the weakest like an angel of God? Have there not been other faces like the face of Moses, which shone as he came down from the Mount of Communion with God? Or, as Milton puts it,

> Oft converse with heavenly habitants
> Begins to cast a beam on the outward shape,
> The unpolluted temple of the mind.

Even as the fashion of His countenance was altered, so the inner life of Christ, deep and true in a man's heart, will write its presence in his countenance, and show how awful and how blessed goodness is.[1]

¶ Do you remember the scene in *Roderick Hudson*, a story written by Henry James? The hero, who is a young artist, has wandered to Rome, and there drifted into a life of selfish indulgence. But far away from the old American home a mother's prayers had followed him. Her absent boy made her forget self in those moments when she kneeled at the throne of Grace; then face and soul become strangely plastic. She was conscious of no change as the years sped, but when at last she crossed the ocean in search of her son, and they met in the foreign city, the artist asked in surprise: "What has happened to your face? It has changed its expression." "Your mother has prayed a great deal," she replied. "Well, it makes a good face," answered the artist. "It has very fine lines in it."[2]

3. Now, how is this transfiguration to take place in our lives? We are not left in doubt as to the power which is to produce the change. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. We are to be transformed by the renewing of the mind; the change must begin within; we must invoke spiritual influences, power from on high. It will not be denied us if we seek it. "Ask, and ye shall receive." We must not begin trying to correct outward habits till we have implored inward grace. We must believe that the Holy Spirit is willing to make His abode in our hearts.

¶ Have you ever thought about the large place the New Testament gives to our mind? In the very next verse to this

[1] A. Maclaren. [2] A. G. Mackinnon.

St. Paul goes on to say, "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith." That is characteristic of New Testament teaching. "Set your mind on the things that are above." When St. Peter was trying to lead Jesus Christ into temptation, Jesus said to him, "Thou mindest not the things of God." And when St. Paul is describing people who are alienated from God, he says they "mind earthly things." You and I become like the things we think about. If we let our mind be a caravansary for all sorts of evil thoughts, we shall become evil. If we fix our mind upon worldly things, we shall become worldly. If we fix our mind upon things that are above, where Christ is, we shall become like Christ. We grow like the things we think about, and the renewing of the mind means that there is implanted in our heart, if we will have it so, a Divine power that will enable us to think about the things that have praise and virtue until we are changed into their image. We can be transformed by the renewing of our mind.[1]

¶ The real secret of a transfigured life is a transmitted life—Somebody else living in us, with a capital S for that Somebody, looking out of our eyes, giving His beauty to our faces, and His winningness to our personality.[2]

III.

The Motive.

"That ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

1. These remarkable words give the reason or motive why those to whom St. Paul wrote should seek for such a change. The meaning of the words is this: that we may, each one in our own experience, prove—that is, make proof of—that will of God which is good, and acceptable, and perfect.

¶ *Good, acceptable, perfect.* These adjectives may either qualify the "will of God" as in the Authorized Version, or be in apposition to it, as in the Revised Version margin. The latter construction agrees better with the rhythm of the sentence. The will of God is identified with what is "good" in the moral sense:

[1] J. E. Roberts. [2] S. D. Gordon.

"acceptable," well pleasing (that is, to God); and "perfect," that is, ethically adequate or complete.

¶ You wish to know what is the will of God which you must follow amid the dark perplexities of your life. Well, remember that the will of God is a living will. It develops from age to age. It moves within a world of constantly changing circumstances, and amid conditions which, like man's life upon the earth, never continue in one stay. It is one thing to be sure that Jesus Christ dealt with the various situations that confronted Him with the certain authority of a sovereign conscience. It is quite another to examine His teaching in order to discover a moral code, or a system of casuistry which will apply to every development of social and personal life. There are those who hope to settle each matter that comes to them for decision by opening the sacred volume and accepting the first text on which the eye falls as revealing the Divine Will. There is more reason in this method of consulting the oracles of God than in that attitude towards it, still far too popular, which seems to regard it as a sort of religious red book, where precepts of conduct are to be learned as though they were the details of drill. Why, even the old Hebrews were taught that the way in which God reveals His mind to His children is more intimate and spiritual than this. "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." The Word of God is not graven on stone; it is written on the tablets of the heart. Not outward conformity to a system, but the inward response to the self-revealing Spirit is that secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him.[1]

2. To see the great importance of this declaration let us inquire, in the first place, what it implies. Now it implies two things.

(1) *Our salvation is the will of God.*—It is the will of God that we should be good, and holy, and acceptable in His sight; that (to gather all into one word) we should be saved; and that, if we are not saved, it is not because it is God's will to leave us to perish, but in spite of God's will, which would have us saved.

¶ The will of God is not an eccentric will, like that of His wayward creatures, neither is it an arbitrary will, the will of one who is merely All-Power; but it is the will of Him who is Holiness, Wisdom, and Love, just as much as Power. When, therefore, He wills our salvation, He wills it in a certain way: in the way of truth, and wisdom, and love. He wills, that is, first,

[1] J. G. Simpson.

that we should truly be; that we should be not mere machines through which He works, but reasonable beings—beings who can choose; who can love Him; who can return love for love.[1]

¶ He told me that in the loneliness of his own room he had been thinking of his sinful and wretched life, and feeling how impossible it was for him ever to be a different man, when all of a sudden, just like a voice in his soul, he heard the announcement that Christ alone can take away the sins of a man. In a flash he saw that he had nothing to do but surrender; that he was not to strive, but to be grateful; that God was only asking him to believe, not to struggle, not to build up the ruins of his life. "I simply gave myself to God," he said quietly. "I don't know how else to put it. I surrendered, laid down my arms, and felt all through my soul that I was pardoned and restored." That is nine years ago. For nine years this man has not only been immune from drink, has not only made a comfortable home for his children, has not only been a first-rate workman and a good citizen, but throughout those nine years he has been, in Sister Agatha's phrase, "a worker for Christ, beloved by all, and a hiding-place for many." If you could see the brightness of his face and feel the overflowing happiness of his heart, you would better realize the miracle of conversion. The man is a living joy.[2]

(2) *It is given to us to make trial of this will of God*—to experience it; to prove it; to find it working in us; to know that it is real, by its life within ourselves. This Will of God is on our side; it is not in word and by accommodation, but indeed true, that He would have us perfect, acceptable, and blessed; and if we will but seek to be renewed, we shall know that all this is indeed so, by His blessed power day by day renewing us ourselves.

¶ The primary meaning of the word "prove" in our text is to recognize, discern, discriminate. Hence we find that to come thus into affinity with God is to evolve an organ of spiritual consciousness. We cannot even know one another except through affinity. This is everywhere the key to intimacy with a person. It is this that conducts us behind the veil, and admits us to the adytum—the holy place of personality which is screened from the common gaze. The same law holds for the Divine. Love and loyalty and likeness to God will admit us to the secret place of His will. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."[3]

[1] S. Wilberforce.
[2] H. Begbie, *In the Hand of the Potter*, 266.
[3] H. Howard.

3. We have examined what the words imply. Let us now see some of the consequences which follow.

(1) *The danger of thwarting God's will.*—Here is the key to the secret history of every careless life amongst us Christians, in its course and in its end. In its course—for such a life is a continuous striving against the will of God for us; against His gracious will that we should be good, and perfect, and acceptable before Him.

(2) *The assurance of success.*—What an untold might would be ours in striving against sin, if we did indeed believe it to be God's will that we should overcome in the struggle! The first condition of success is the expectation of succeeding. How it nerves the soldier's arm to know that he fights under a general who has always conquered. And so it is also in all the conflicts of our spiritual life. The lack of such confidence is one of the most common grounds of our weakness. We do not strengthen ourselves in God; we doubt His good will towards us; we practically shut Him out of our thoughts; and we are lost.

(3) *The reality imparted to the spiritual life.*—The "proving" of God's will is that which gives a sense of true reality to all the spiritual world around us and within us. God's word, prayer, the holy Sacraments, all the ordinances of Christ's Church, as well as the more hidden suggestions of the blessed Spirit, through the heart and conscience—these are all full of a living reality for him who knows that he is here training under the active loving energies of the Almighty Will.

I worship Thee, sweet Will of God!
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live, I seem
To love Thee more and more.

Thou wert the end, the blessèd rule
Of our Saviour's toils and tears;
Thou wert the passion of His Heart
Those three-and-thirty years.

And He hath breathed into my soul
A special love of Thee,
A love to lose my will in His,
And by that loss be free.

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's Will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost.

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison-walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee.[1]

[1] F. W. Faber.

Business.

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BUSINESS.

Not slothful in business.—Rom. xii. 11 (AV).

IF we take the word "business" in this text in the sense of trade or occupation, we may make the text a starting-point for a consideration of the relation between business and religion. Let us put the question thus: Is it possible to be a Christian in business? And let us endeavour to answer it by answering the following questions:—

I. What is Business?
II. What hinders one from being a Christian in Business?
III. What helps one to be a Christian in Business?

I.

WHAT IS BUSINESS?

The word "business" has come to mean much in our daily speech. Its meaning, as we use it, cannot be expressed by any single word in any other language. Like "home" and "neighbour," it enshrines a tradition and stands for a history. It means a vast department of human activity, in which all the movements of labour and commerce are included. It now stands for a far-reaching estate, which, though it cannot be claimed that the Anglo-Saxon race created it, has undoubtedly been organized by English-speaking peoples, who have made it the controlling power in the modern political world. The old sneer that the English are a nation of shopkeepers has lost its point though not its truth. More than all other secular agencies, the business enterprise of the English-speaking races has blessed the human race. It has led the van in the triumphal progress of Christian civilization. It has opened up continents, peopled deserts, and whitened solitary seas with the sails of commerce.

Thus the old English word "business" has come to have a definite and noble meaning. It stands for a mighty commonwealth wherein men and nations are intimately related to each other. It has its own laws, enacted by the Supreme Law-giver, which senates and parliaments do not need to enact and cannot set aside. It enforces these laws by the swift and unerring awards of success or failure. It builds its own capitals in many lands on spots designated by God Himself, and in them it erects stately palaces which far outstrip the pride and magnificence of former ages. It has its own leaders, and it sets one up and pulls another down according as each obeys or disobeys its behests. Kings and cabinets are obedient to its commands. Armies are now little more than its auxiliaries, the hired mercenaries with which it protects its interests. A monarch surrounded by Oriental pomp in his Eastern capital dares to interfere with the interests of a lumber company in Burma. An English expeditionary army sets out from Calcutta, marches to Mandalay, dethrones that mad and foolish king, and sees to it that the injured lumber company shall cut their logs of teak on the mountains of Burma in security and peace. When Muscovite or Austrian ambition marshals its legions, or Moslem fanaticism musters its Asiatic hordes, the business interests of Europe and the world call a halt to the fierce armies and insist that peace shall not be broken or war declared except as they shall dictate. The success or failure of campaigns, of diplomacy, of statesmanship is registered instantly, in all the world's markets, in the rise or fall of prices, in the establishment or impairment of business confidence. And so it has come to pass that almost all the practical concerns of the world have fallen under the influence of its potent mastery, and yield to the demands and movements of business.

When we go behind these general considerations, however, we find that this great commonwealth rests on God's enactment. When He commanded man to replenish the earth and subdue it, He issued His royal charter to business. Business means the appropriation and subjection of the world by man to himself. Beginning with agriculture, which is its simplest form, and rising through all grades of industrial and commercial activity, whatsoever subdues the external world to man's will, and appropriates its power, its beauty, its usefulness, is business; and whoso

worthily engages in it is helping to carry out God's design, and is so far engaged in His service. To conquer the earth, and force the wild fen or stony field to bring forth bread to gladden the heart of man; to level useless hills, and say to obstructive mountains, Be ye removed from the path of progress; to summon the lightnings to be his messengers, and cause the viewless winds to be his servants; to bring all the earth into subjection to human will and human intelligence—this is man's earthly calling, and history is but the progressive accomplishment of it. Therefore it is that, rightly regarded, business is a department of Christian activity. Therefore it is to be said and insisted on that the worthy business of everyday life is a department of genuine Christian culture that ought to be pursued with high aims and lofty motives, not only for what it enables man to do, but chiefly for what it enables man to be in the exercise of his kingly function and in the development of his kingly character.

Now there are three aspects in which business may be considered by the follower of Christ.

1. *It is a means of earning a livelihood.*—In other words, it is a way of making money. Now if we consider it, we shall see that money, honestly earned, represents so much good done in the world. You produce what the world wants, and you get paid for it by those who want it. And, in that, you have done a positive good, and your profit has a moral value in it, as representing a want supplied and a fellow-man advantaged. Thus, the farmer who does his best with his fields is doing a duty not only to himself, but to his fellow-men and his God; for his fellow-men need his corn, and God desires his services in feeding His children. The manufacturer in his mill, the merchant on the Exchange, the trader in his shop may all feel the same—that the Great Master needs them because the Master's world needs them, and that diligence in their several callings is not only necessary in order to earn their daily bread, but that honour and religion call upon them to lose no time, and dissipate no faculty, and squander no power.

¶ I once had a clerk who, being a very dazzling genius, led me into many postal difficulties. The quantities of paper that boy went through are not to be stated without long and serious

thought. That was, however, comparatively a trifle. The gifted youth put the letters in the wrong envelopes, and used foreign stamps for inland correspondence with a prodigal hand. This was genius. This was the noble-mindedness which soars above the mean region of details. When I sent him away, his mother complained of my being "severe," and, looking at me with large and reproachful eyes, said, in an annihilating tone, "And you a minister!"[1]

2. *It is a debt to society.*—It is an equivalent which we have to pay to society for our share of its advantages. Every man gets his share of the privileges of society. He gets his food three times a day; he gets his clothes; and he gets some kind of lodging to defend him from the wind and weather. These society has to fetch for him from afar. His tea is brought from China; his rice from India; the cotton he wears from America; the timber of the roof above his head from Norway. Now, for these advantages which society confers on the individual she demands in return his day's work. If she is well satisfied with it she may give him finer clothes, finer food, finer lodging, and even add delightful extras—like a good house, wife and children, desirable friends, books, pictures, travel, and the like. But the principle is the same all through—that you must give your day's work for your share of society's advantages. Some speculators in our day hold that man has a natural right to these things. When a child is born, they maintain, it has a right to be fed, to be clothed, to be housed. Well, perhaps a child has; but an able-bodied man has not, unless he is ready to work for them. It is the law of the Bible and the law of common sense that if any man do not work neither shall he eat.

¶ It is necessary that we should be fed and clothed. Or we may put it in another way and say, God wants us to be fed and clothed. He, therefore, who helps to feed and clothe us by his skill, his labour, or his enterprise, is not only a public benefactor, but a doer of God's will. The merchant who sends his ships to bring here the produce of other lands, and to take to other lands the productions of our own, is really discharging one of the great duties of natural religion, at the same time that he is earning honourable wealth; and, if he is successful, his profit is not only an honourable profit, well earned and richly deserved, but it is, in a sense,

[1] Joseph Parker, *Well Begun*, 69.

God's blessing on him as a faithful servant. He may never have thought of God from beginning to end; but what he has done is in full accord with the Divine mind and plan. Nay! the man who spends his working day in merely baking bread, or in laying one brick upon another, or in paving streets, is doing part of the world's needed work, and is offering daily Divine service; for God wants men fed, and houses built, and streets made; and thus the humblest toiler—at forge or loom, in the shop or in the street—may lift up his head and say, "I also am a servant of the Great Master—a subject of the Universal Lord and King."[1]

¶ I do not see how it consists with the temper of Christianity that any Christian should busy himself and spend his days for what is undisguisedly and exclusively a selfish result. The business of every Christian in this world is really not to serve himself only, but to serve his generation and his God. In every other calling he is bound to do that, and, in proportion as his Christian motives animate him, he actually does it. Why not in trade and commerce? Work is dignified to all of us workers only when we can feel that what we are doing has some worth or value to society besides the pay it brings to the workers. Is business any fair exception to that rule? Does the merchant serve no public advantage? Is his not a ministry by which the world benefits? Most assuredly it is. The banker, the trader, the commission merchant, the stockbroker are useful because they either facilitate production itself or else they assist those great carrying agencies by which earth's productions become available to all the earth's scattered populations. You cannot justify the existence of any human industry except on the broad ground of its utility. Then I ask you this: Is it not a nobler and more Christian spirit which keeps the utility of one's work in view and feels itself to be the minister of the needs of society than is the sordid temper which is perpetually thinking of nothing but its pay? For, of course, from this point of view, the profits of business are simply pay, simply that which accrues to every honest and useful occupation, whatever form it may take, of salary, or interest on capital, or profit drawn from extended labour and increased value of commodity. A trader's gain is his wage, and his moral right to it rests ultimately on the fact that he is a useful member of society, that he ministers in a way of his own to the common weal.[2]

3. *It is a discipline of character.*—If rightly and wisely conducted there is no better discipline for the formation of character

[1] J. P. Hopps. [2] J. Oswald Dykes.

than business. It teaches in its own way the peculiar value of regard for others' interests, of spotless integrity, of unimpeachable righteousness; and the busy activities of life, considered in themselves, are good and not evil. They are a part of God's great work, and are as much His appointment as the services of praise and prayer. I think we all need to be reminded of the dignity and sacredness of a worthy everyday life. God's Kingdom includes more than the services of the sanctuary. The court-house is His temple too, and so is the chamber of commerce. It is just as holy a thing to work as it is to pray; and the distribution of commerce, the helpfulness of trade, the feeding and sheltering of those belonging to us, and all the honourable ministries in which a high-minded business man engages are just as truly a part of God's service, if men could see and feel them to be so, as is the function of the preacher. But then, as St. Paul never failed to teach, these things are means, not an end. Their value lies not in themselves, but in the discipline, the character, the power which they give to do higher things.

¶ Alexander T. Stewart, of New York, was probably the greatest merchant of his time. He built up his vast fortune by concentration of purpose, and by exercising the qualities of the born "man." He began life as a school-assistant, but soon saw greater possibilities in storekeeping. Without hesitation he made the change which some might have thought a step down the ladder. For years his working hours were from fourteen to eighteen per day. He carried out on his own shoulders the goods he sold, and thus saved the wages of a porter. The store speedily expanded. In course of time his industry, zeal, and capable perseverance made him a millionaire. Integrity of morals is very often a chief factor in preparing any prosperity that deserves the name. Stewart had in his establishment the fixed trading principle, "Honesty between buyer and seller." He was materially helped by the popular knowledge of the fact.[1]

(1) God intended business life to be a *school of energy.* He has started us in the world, giving us a certain amount of raw material out of which we are to hew our own character. Every faculty needs to be reset, sharpened. And when a man for ten, or fifteen, or twenty, or thirty years has been going through business activities, his energy can scale any height, can sound

[1] W. J. Lacey, *Masters of To-morrow*, 16.

any depth. Now, God has not spent all this education on us for the purpose of making us more successful worldlings. He has put us in this school to develop our energy for His cause and Kingdom. There is enough unemployed talent in the churches and the world to-day to reform all empires and all kingdoms and people in three weeks.

(2) Again, God intended business life to be to us a *school of knowledge.* Merchants do not read many books, or study many lexicons, yet through the force of circumstances they become intelligent on questions of politics, and finance, and geography, and jurisprudence, and ethics. Business is a hard schoolmistress. If her pupils will not learn in any other way, with unmerciful hand she smites them on the head and on the heart with inexorable loss. Expensive schooling; but it is worth it. Traders in grain must know about foreign harvests. Traders in fruit must know about the prospects of tropical production. Owners of ships come to understand winds, and shoals, and navigation. And so every bale of cotton, and every raisin cask, and every tea box, and every cluster of bananas becomes literature to our business men. Now, what is the use of all this intelligence unless they *give it to Christ*? Does God give us these opportunities of brightening the intellect and of increasing our knowledge merely to get larger treasures and greater business? Can it be that we have been learning about foreign lands and people that dwell under other skies, and yet have no missionary spirit?

(3) God intended business life to be to us a *school of patience.* How many little things there are in one day's engagements to disquiet us! Men will break their engagements. Collecting agents will come back empty-handed. Tricksters in business will play upon what they call the "hard times," when in any times they never pay. Goods are placed on the wrong shelf. Cash books and money drawer are in a quarrel. Goods ordered for a special emergency fail to come, or they are damaged on the way. People who intend no harm go about shopping, unrolling goods they do not mean to buy, and try to break the dozen. Men are obliged to take other people's notes. More counterfeit bills are in the drawer. There are more bad debts. There comes another ridiculous panic. How many have gone down under the pressure, and have become choleric and sour. But other men have found

in all this a school of patience. They were like rocks, more serviceable for the blasting. There was a time when they had to choke down their wrath. There was a time when they had to bite their lip. There was a time when they thought of a stinging retort they would like to utter. But now they have conquered their impatience. They have kind words for sarcastic flings. They have a polite behaviour for discourteous customers. They have forbearance for unfortunate debtors. How are we going to get that grace of patience? Let us pray to God that through all the exasperation of our everyday life we may hear a voice saying to us, "Let patience have her perfect work."

(4) God also intended business life to be a *school of integrity.* It may be rare to find a man who can from his heart say, "I never cheated in trade. I never overestimated the value of goods when I was selling them. I never covered up a defect in a fabric. I never played upon the ignorance of a customer, and in all my estate there is not one dishonest farthing!" But there are some who can say it. They never let their integrity bow or cringe to present advantage. They are as pure and Christian to-day as on the day when they sold their first tierce of rice or their first firkin of butter. There were times when they could have robbed a partner, when they could have absconded with the funds of a bank, when they could have sprung a snap judgment, when they could have borrowed illimitably, when they could have made a false assignment, when they could have ruined a neighbour for the purpose of picking up some of the fragments; but they never took one step on that pathway.

¶ Judaism in its highest and ripest expression was still haunted by the feeling that between the service of the Lord and the practices of business there was some irreconcilable contradiction. In that beautiful Book of Ecclesiasticus, where the old faith most nearly approaches the new, we read—

A merchant shall hardly keep himself from wrong-doing,
And a huckster shall not be acquitted of sin.
Many have sinned for a thing indifferent;
And he that seeketh to multiply gain will turn his eye away.
A nail will stick between the joinings of stones;
And sin will thrust itself between buying and selling.

It is a new note that is struck in the New Testament, where

business, the buying and selling, the work by which the daily bread is earned, is enjoined as the means of realizing the Kingdom of heaven. No New Testament writer would think of saying that the ordinary operations of life are a hindrance to religion. The point of view is entirely changed. The Christian is to go into the world and engage in its duties for the express purpose of bringing all its activities under the dominion of Christ, or, rather, of letting the will of Christ operate freely in the shaping and conduct of the world's affairs.[1]

¶ A business man, not being well, came to his doctor. The doctor told him he had a bad heart. He said, "At any time you may die suddenly, or you may live for years." The man was at first greatly shocked, and said, "Shall I give up business?" The doctor said, "No, you will die the sooner probably for that. Go on, but don't hurry and don't worry." This man went to his place of business and called together the heads of the departments and told them what the doctor had said to him. "Now," he said, "I shall come to business, but I can't be everywhere, and I want you to understand that this business is to be conducted with the understanding and the expectation that Jesus Christ may come to the master at any minute, and when He comes I don't want Him to find anything in this firm we would not like Him to see."

II.

What are the Hindrances?

They are partly theoretical and partly practical. They arise partly from the laws of trade involving competition and opening the door to selfishness, and partly from the actual prevalence of evil ways and the difficulty of making a stand against them.

1. *Selfishness.*—A business man is peculiarly liable to a special form of selfishness. It is not the selfishness of ease or self-indulgence; it is the selfishness of gain, of profit, of personal advantage. Profit, of course, is the very essence of success in business. It is the measure of success, and there could not long continue to be business without it. But with the eager business man the making of profit is apt to become an absorbing passion for its own sake. His ordinary relations with men are apt to be more or less controlled by it. He is in danger of carrying it into

[1] R. F. Horton.

his social life, of valuing men and politics and principles according to the advantage that may accrue to him from his connexion with them. Such a man soon begins to wish to make his association pay, and his friendships, and his politics, and everything that he is and has and does. And if he is successful, a certain selfish pride establishes itself in his heart. We all know this ignoble type of character. And then, dogging the heels of this selfish pride, comes avarice—that amazing and monstrous passion of the soul which loves money for its own sake, which grows on what it feeds on, which can never be appeased, which never has enough.

¶ One day a keen business man in one of the chief cities of the world said to another, "I can take a certain bit of business away from you." It was a profitable series of transactions, which the man addressed had been carefully nursing and building up for years. In the throat-cut competition so familiar in business the other man could bring powerful influences to bear that would result in this business matter being transferred with all its profits to his own concern. The threatened man realized the power of his business rival, and, desiring to make the best of the situation, proposed that they should divide the business equally between them. And so it was arranged. The second man still conducts the business matters involved, and at the regular periods of settlement hands one-half of the profits over to his rival. The other man does nothing, and receives one-half of the other man's profits accruing from this particular bit of business. It looks amazingly like the old highway "stand and deliver" sort of robbery, but conducted in a modern and much more gentlemanly fashion. The law that governs both is the same, the law of force. The Master's follower is to be controlled in all his life by his Master's law of love. The law of love treats the other man as you would want him to treat you.[1]

¶ The Diamond Match Company, of which the President is Mr. Edward Stettinius, has just won golden opinions in the United States by its heroic action. What it has done is this: It has given up its patent for making matches with a non-dangerous material—"sesquisulfid"—so that its competitors may use it instead of the deadly white phosphorous. "My great anxiety," said its President, "is to see American labour protected from the ravages of a wholly unnecessary and loathsome disease.[2]

[1] S. D. Gordon, *The Crowded Inn*, 41.
[2] *Public Opinion* (10th March 1911), 236.

2. *Worldliness.*—Let us thankfully confess that mere selfish avarice is not so rife as it once was. Our modern life is so full of demands on the profit of business that there are not so many miserly men as there once were. But there is another danger, which was never so prevalent as it is now. This may be called the worldliness of business. Men are simply absorbed and engrossed and satisfied with their business pursuits and business interests, and so neglect and forget their religious and eternal interests. If this world were the only world and this life the only life, then it might be wise and worthy in man to devote himself without reserve to the things that belong only to this world and this life. But man is more than a denizen of this world. He is more than an animal to eat and drink and be clothed. He is more than a calculating machine to puzzle over life's problems. He is more than a mercenary recruit drafted into the world's great army to fight its battles of progress. His own spirit bears witness to its immortal dignity and destiny. His heart, which cannot be satisfied here; his reason, which soars above the things of time and sense; his conscience, which bids him look for an eternal retribution on wrong-doing—his whole nature pleads trumpet-tongued against the shame and indignity of mere worldliness. And yet with strange inconsistency multitudes of business men make light of the wants of their immortal souls, and go their ways engrossed by utter worldliness.

> Never exceed thy income. Youth may make
> Ev'n with the yeare; but Age, if it will hit,
> Shoots a bow short, and lessens still his stake,
> As the day lessens, and his life with it.
> Thy children, kindred, friends upon thee call;
> Before thy journey fairly part with all.
>
> Yet in thy thriving still misdoubt some evil,
> Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee dimme
> To all things els. Wealth is the conjurer's devil,
> Whom when he thinks he hath, the devil hath him.
> Gold thou mayst safely touch; but if it stick
> Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.
>
> What skills it, if a bag of stones or gold
> About thy neck do drown thee? Raise thy head,

> Take starres for money,—starres not to be told
> By any art, yet to be purchased.[1]

3. *Custom.*—Here two sides have to be considered.

(1) On the one hand it is true that there are businesses which are not conducted with the least pretence of Christianity or even much pretence of common honesty.

¶ One hears too often of assistants in places of business being tempted by their employers to do things against their conscience. No longer ago than last week I read in a reputable paper an article on this subject, giving instances known to the writer; and recently a business man who had written a book sent me a copy, in which he gave instances which had come under his own cognizance. For instance, a young ship captain, in a storm, sustained damage to his vessel, and he was called upon to make out for the under-writers an inventory of the loss sustained; but his employers hinted to him that, the ship being old and out of repair, at any rate he might include in the estimate all the repairs that she was in need of. Another instance was that of a salesman at the head of a department in a large dry-goods store. Some of the buyers came from rural places, and many of these would not even commence to do business until they were treated with champagne. There were other cases given of even meaner dishonesty.[2]

(2) On the other hand it is probable that deliberate meanness and dishonesty in business is not so common as it is supposed to be. A paper was read on the subject by a business man at a recent Church Congress. He said: "There is in business much immorality of a gross kind, but it is not widespread. There is a great deal more of what may be called white-lying immorality. The characteristic of the English is to desire honesty and fair dealing, but under the strain of great competition the desire is not yet strong enough to keep men in the even way. Morality in the second degree, which means taking any possible advantage of your neighbour without deception or untruth, is very general. To live and let live, to rejoice in aiding others, to divide, as it were, the benefits of supply and demand, instead of seeking solely one's own interest—this is the morality in commerce of which there is to-day the greatest need."

¶ It is very common to hear it said that all business is a kind of cheating; that in nature the law is "eat or be eaten," and in

[1] George Herbert, *The Temple.* [2] J. Stalker.

business "cheat or be cheated"; that one must do as others do or close one's shop; that it is impossible to apply the principles of Christian truth and justice in business, and so on. But the repetition of these sayings is in this case, as in others, always of the nature of finding an excuse for one's self by saying that "everybody does it." It is always said from a desire to transfer the blame which we feel that our action deserves, and put it on the broad shoulders of "everybody," or of Providence itself. But I believe there is much exaggeration in the charge of general or universal dishonesty. The whole international trade of this country rests on the basis of mutual confidence and credit, and if this were unsound, that trade could not go on. It is our reputation for integrity and fairness, as well as for the excellence of our goods, that gives the English an advantage. The honesty and word of an Englishman count for much, and can generally be relied on. So I am inclined to believe that morality in business in England is not below the English morality in other respects, and can rise only by the general rise of the standard of character in all respects.[1]

III.

What are the Helps?

1. *Be a Christian unmistakably.*—Whatever may be the difficulties of a Christian life in the world, they need not discourage us. Whatever may be the work to which our Master calls us, He offers us a strength commensurate with our needs. No man who wishes to serve Christ will ever fail for lack of heavenly aid. And it will be no valid excuse for an ungodly life that it is difficult to keep alive the flame of piety in the world, if Christ is ready to supply the fuel.

(1) To all, then, who really wish to lead such a life, let it be said that the first thing to be done—that without which all other efforts are worse than vain—is to devote themselves heartily to God through Christ Jesus. Much as has been said of the infusion of religious principle and motive into our worldly work, there is a preliminary advice of greater importance still—that we *be religious.* Life comes before growth. The soldier must enlist before he can serve. In vain are directions how to keep the fire always burning on the altar, if it is not first kindled. No religion can be genuine,

[1] J. M. Wilson.

no goodness can be constant or lasting, that springs not from faith in Jesus Christ as its primary source. To know Christ as my Saviour; to come with all my guilt and weakness to Him in whom trembling penitence never fails to find a friend; to cast myself at His feet in whom all that is sublime in Divine holiness is softened, though not obscured, by all that is beautiful in human tenderness; and, believing in that love stronger than death which, for me and such as me, drained the cup of untold sorrows, and bore without a murmur the bitter curse of sin, to trust my soul for time and eternity into His hands—this is the beginning of true religion. And it is the reverential love with which the believer must ever look to Him to whom he owes so much, that constitutes the mainspring of the religion of daily life. Selfishness may prompt to a formal religion, natural susceptibility may give rise to a fitful one, but for a life of constant fervent piety, amidst the world's cares and toils, no motive is sufficient save one —self-devoted love to Christ.

¶ There is a passage in a Greek drama in which one of the personages shrinks irresolutely from a proposed crime which is to turn out to his own and his companion's great profit; and the other says to him, "*Dare*—, and *afterwards* we shall show ourselves just." It is to be feared that this is the way in which many a man has spoken to his own faltering conscience, when it shrank from an unscrupulous act which promised a great worldly advancement. *Dare*, he has said to himself, dare to take this one step; this step will be the beginning of advancement, and when I am elevated in the world, then I shall show myself a good man, and have the reputation of one. Thus it is that people persuade themselves that religion is not made for the hurry and the struggle of life. Now, they say or they think, now, in the very thick of the struggle, they must be allowed some little liberty, afterwards it will be different; but *now* one cannot be impeded; now there must not be this check, this shackle; now it is inopportune, unsuitable to the crisis; religion must wait a little.[1]

(2) But again, if we would lead a Christian life in the world, that life must be *continued* as well as begun with Christ. We must learn to look to Him not merely as our Saviour from guilt, but as the Friend of our secret life, the chosen Companion of our solitary hours, the Depositary of all the deeper thoughts and

[1] J. B. Mozley.

feelings of our soul. We cannot live *for* Him in the world unless we live much *with* Him, apart from the world. In spiritual as in secular things the deepest and strongest characters need much solitude to form them. Even earthly greatness, still more moral and spiritual greatness, is never attained but as the result of much that is concealed from the world, of many a lonely and meditative hour. Thoughtfulness, self-knowledge, self-control, a chastened wisdom, and piety are the fruit of habitual meditation and prayer. In these exercises Heaven is brought near, and our exaggerated estimate of earthly things is corrected. By these our spiritual energies, shattered and worn by the friction of worldly work, are repaired. In the recurring seasons of devotion the cares and anxieties of worldly business cease to vex us; exhausted with its toils, we have, in daily communion with God, meat to eat which the world knows not of; and even when its calamities and losses fall upon us, and our portion of worldly good is perhaps withdrawn, we may be able to show, like those holy ones of old at the heathen court, by the fair serene countenance of the spirit, that we have something better than the world's pulse to feed upon.

¶ I say to my friend: "Be a Christian." That means to be a full man. And he says to me: "I have not time to be a Christian. I have not room. If my life were not so full. You don't know how hard I work from morning to night. What time is there for me to be a Christian? What time is there, what room is there for Christianity in such a life as mine?" But does it not come to seem to us so strange, so absurd, if it were not so melancholy, that a man should say such a thing as that? It is as if the engine had said it had no room for the steam. It is as if the tree had said it had no room for the sap. It is as if the ocean had said it had no room for the tide. It is as if the man had said that he had no room for his soul. It is as if life said that it had no time to live, when it is life. It is not something that is added to life. It is life. A man is not living without it. And when a man says, "I am so full in life that I have no room for life," you see immediately to what absurdity it reduces itself. And how a man knows what he is called upon by God's voice, speaking to him every hour, speaking to him every moment, speaking to him out of everything, that which the man is called upon to do because it is the man's only life! Therefore time, room, that is what time, that is what room is for—life. Life is the thing

we seek, and man finds it in the fulfilment of his life by Jesus Christ.[1]

2. *Carry religion into every part of life.*—If we carry the principles of Christ with us into the world, the world will become hallowed by their presence. A Christlike spirit will Christianize everything it touches. A meek heart, in which the altar-fire of love to God is burning, will lay hold of the commonest, rudest things in life, and transmute them, like coarse fuel at the touch of fire, into a pure and holy flame. Religion in the soul will make all the work and toil of life—its gains and losses, friendships, rivalries, competitions, its manifold incidents and events—the means of religious advancement. Marble or coarse clay, it matters not much with which of these the artist works, the touch of genius transforms the coarser material into beauty, and lends to the finer a value it never had before. Lofty or lowly, rude or refined, as our earthly work may be, it will become to a holy mind only the material for an infinitely nobler work than all the creations of genius—a pure and godlike life. To spiritualize what is material, to Christianize what is secular—this is the noble achievement of Christian principle.

¶ "There is one proposition," says Mr. Gladstone, "which the experience of life burns into my soul; it is this, that a man should beware of letting his religion spoil his morality. In a thousand ways, some great, some small, but all subtle, we are daily tempted to that great sin." What did Gladstone mean by that? He immediately adds, for he was an intensely religious man himself: "To speak of such a thing seems dishonouring to God; but it is not religion as it comes from Him, it is religion with the strange and evil mixtures which it gathers from dwelling in us."[2] And that is the heart of the trouble. A religion which concerns itself chiefly with ritual or creed or form, which separates itself from life by insisting on exclusive privileges for itself and its votaries, which is formal and official instead of being real and vital, imperils the foundations of common morality. As long as we are content to treat our religion in that way, its place in the practical concerns of life will inevitably be that of an interloper, intruding and interfering where it does not belong. There was, indeed, much truth and homely wisdom in the advice which young David Livingstone received from his grandfather when he left Blantyre for the old College at Glasgow: "Dauvit,

[1] P. Brooks, *Addresses*, 61. [2] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 185.

Dauvit, make your religion an everyday business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts."[1]

¶ Out of the pulpit I would be the same man I was in it, seeing and feeling the realities of the unseen; and in the pulpit I would be the same man I was out of it, taking facts as they are, and dealing with things as they show themselves in the world.[2]

(1) It is convenient, no doubt, to distinguish what is commonly described as "secular" from what is commonly described as "religious." We all know what the distinction means. But the distinction must not be understood to imply that in religious work we are doing God's will, and that in secular work we are not doing it. God Himself has done, and is always doing, a great deal of work that we must call secular; and this throws considerable light on the laws which should govern our own secular calling. He is the Creator of all things. He made the earth, and He made it broad enough for us to grow corn and grass on it, to build cities on it, with town-halls, courts of justice, houses of parliament, schools, universities, literary institutes, and galleries of art. It is impossible to use it all for churches and chapels, or for any other "consecrated" purpose. God made a great part of the world for common uses; but since the world, every acre, every square yard of it, belongs to Him, since He is the only Freeholder, we have no right to build anything on it that He does not want to have built. He kindled the fires of the sun, and the sun gives us light, not only on Sundays when we go to church, but on common days, and we have no right to use the sunlight for any purpose for which God does not give it. God made the trees; but He made too many for the timber to be used only for buildings intended for religious worship. What did He make the rest for? It is His timber. He never parts with His property in it. When we buy it we do not buy it from God; we pay Him no money for it. All that we do is to pay money to our fellow-men that we may have the right to use it in God's service.

¶ It is as secular a work to create a walnut-tree, and to provide soil and rain and warmth for its growth, as it is to make a walnut-wood table for a drawing-room out of it. It is as

[1] D. S. Mackay. [2] George Macdonald.

secular a work to create a cotton plant as to spin the cotton and to weave it. It is as secular a work to create iron as to make the iron into railway girders, into plates for steamships, into ploughs and harrows, nails, screws, and bedsteads. It is as secular a work to create the sun to give light in the daytime as to make a lamp, or to build gasworks, or to manufacture gas, to give light at night.[1]

¶ Religion consists, not so much in doing spiritual or sacred acts, as in doing secular acts from a sacred or spiritual motive.[2]

¶ The mite of the widow was more than the gold of the scribe. And why? Because motive is more to God than matter, though it be gold. The broken cry of the publican was a truer prayer than the self-satisfied cadence of the Pharisee. And why? Because motive, not method, however beautiful, is what the great Father sees. Let, then, any man, I care not who he may be, bring himself into an intellectual condition in which he feels that religion is essentially a round of outward service only, and whether that man perform his service in a Quaker meeting-house, in a Methodist chapel, or in a majestic minster, he is simply reducing religion into a meanness that is less than human, and abstracting from it every element that makes it Divine and uplifting. But, on the other hand, any action done nobly and in Christ's spirit, whether in the smithy, or in the steamboat, or in the market-place, may be sacred.[3]

(2) The spiritual life is perfected through the worldly life, and the worldly life is perfected through the spiritual life.

So far from teaching that the spiritual life is antagonistic to life of secular action, the New Testament teaches that the spiritual is directly related to the worldly life, and that the former is perfected by the latter. The cares of domesticity, the duties of citizenship, the exercises of trade, the implications of industry and toil are all influentially soliciting, training, invigorating, unfolding, and in a thousand ways perfecting the faculties of the soul and disciplining them in righteousness. If we observe the intellectual life we see at once that men can never, except with extreme disadvantage, divorce themselves from tangible things. If from any motive intellectual men isolate themselves from the commonplace world of facts, if they deny their sense, if they attempt to pursue their studies in a purely metaphysical manner,

[1] R. W. Dale. [2] John Caird. [3] W. H. Dallinger.

they immediately and manifestly suffer. It is almost universally recognized that artists cannot with impunity exclude the actual world and resign themselves to reverie and metaphysics. And the same thing is most true in relation to our spiritual life—that life can grow only as it is elicited, exercised, conditioned by our worldly life. The world is a magnificent apparatus of discipline with which no spiritual man can affect to dispense. We cannot work out our highest life in isolation, abstraction, asceticism, in independence of daily, trivial, vulgar life. It is not by isolating ourselves from earthly things that we shall lay hold of the Divine life; it is by the true use and sanctification of the earthly life that we attain the Divine and the eternal. If intellectual monasticism would issue in monstrous masterpieces, in fantastic symphonies, in bizarre poesy, so any shrinking from natural worldly life and its relations produces deformed and morbid character utterly without attractiveness. Be not afraid of secular life and all that it involves.

¶ The painter who refuses to go to nature soon paints badly. He cannot persist in evolving faces and landscapes from his consciousness and continue to produce work of veracity and power. To neglect the colours of summer, the features of the landscape, the lustres of dawn, the aspects of sea and sky, to neglect the facts of anatomy, the lines of physiognomy, the living face, the reality of things, is to sacrifice the truth, the splendour, the magic of art. The painter must live with the visible world, follow her subtle changes, know her as only genius and love can know; he can lay hold of ideal beauty only through close daily contact with corporeal things.[1]

Again, the worldly life is perfected through the spiritual life. It is often urged that the spiritual life is injurious to the worldly life. Secularists profess that the two lives are mutually exclusive. They conclude that just as we are occupied with a higher world we become incapable of making the best of this. We boldly affirm that the whole material life of society here and now is secured and perpetuated by spirituality. It is the habit of the secularist to represent the love of God as so much precious feeling dissipated in the abyss; to consider the worship of God as vital energy scattered in the air; to teach that the thought of the

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

future is thought withdrawn from a present which demands our concentrated strength; but, in fact, a living confidence in God, a living hope of everlasting life, a living faith in the higher law is the golden bond which holds society together, the dynamic which keeps the world moving to the glorious goal. The secularist mocks the spiritualist, and reproaches him as "a child crying for the moon." Well, let the child cry for the moon; it will be a sorry day for the world when the child ceases to cry for it. The child's crying for the moon is the mainspring of civilization. Isaac Newton in infancy cried for the moon, and when he became a man, in a very true and glorious sense, he got it, together with the sun and all the stars. Never crush the aspirations of men, especially their highest aspirations and hopes. Stretching out the hands to that which is beyond urges all things onward to a large and final perfection. Looking to the things which are unseen and eternal we inherit in their fulness the things seen and temporal.

¶ Philosophers are sometimes exceedingly detached from the world, strangely careless about national struggles in which it would seem they ought to be passionately interested. What about Goethe and his lack of patriotism? He was absorbed by singers and actors, by art and literature, and hardly cast a glance at the struggles of the Fatherland. Some poets are notoriously indifferent to practical questions; they ignore contemporaneous politics, they utterly fail in monetary management. Shakespeare's writings contain few and faint reflections of the age in which he lived; and some of the critics accuse Tennyson of insensibility to the social and material aspects of his time. Naturalists, also, like Audubon, have been noted for their aloofness; dreaming in the green wood, they missed the chances of the Stock Exchange. Are we then to draw the large conclusion that philosophy, poetry, and science are unfavourable to practical life? Are we, in the interests of civilization, to discourage this intellectual transcendentalism? Surely not. These men of thought and imagination are guilty of a certain unworldliness and impracticability; but we know that they immensely enrich the world. The legend tells that Newton cut in the door a large orifice for the cat and a small one for the kitten, overlooking the obvious fact that the first aperture served for both; and the average practical man makes merry over the blunder of the astronomer whose eye was dazzled with the infinite spaces and splendours of the firmament. Yet

Newton, stumbling in trivial matters, was enriching the world beyond all successful shopkeeping. And we know that whatever the other-worldliness of our metaphysicians, bards, and philosophers may be, they are precisely the men who make us masters of our environment, and who in a special measure enrich us with the forces and treasures of the world.[1]

3. *Have a high conception of the greatness of your occupation.*—It must add immeasurably to the dignity of a man's life, it must give him a sense of great security, if he seriously believes that his work has been given him by Divine appointment, that it is really his "calling." Take a conspicuous case—the case of the Apostle Paul. St. Paul knew that his work, his "calling" in the old-fashioned sense of the word, came to him from God. But no Christian man can live a satisfactory life without a conviction of the same kind. This would be a dreary and an ignoble world if only an apostle could say that he was doing his work "through the will of God," or if only a minister or a missionary could say it. Mechanics, merchants, tradesmen, manufacturers, clerks, doctors, lawyers, artists—if we are to live a really Christian life, we must all be sure that, whatever work we are doing, it is God's will that we should do it.

¶ It used to be common to speak of a man's trade, profession, or official employment as his "calling." But I think that the word, in this sense, has almost dropped out of use, perhaps because it seems inappropriate and unmeaning. Its Latin equivalent has been rather more fortunate, and is still occasionally used to describe the higher forms of intellectual activity. It is sometimes said, for instance, of a thoughtful, scholarly man who is not very successful as a manufacturer, that he has missed his way, and that his true "vocation" was literature. It is only when we are speaking of the most sacred or most heroic kinds of service that we have the courage to recognize a Divine "call" as giving a man authority to undertake them. That a great religious reformer should think of himself as Divinely "called" to deliver the Church from gross errors and superstitions, and lead it to a nobler righteousness, does not surprise us. It does not surprise us that a great patriot should believe himself "called" of God to redress the wrongs of his country. And among those who are impressed by the glorious and awful issues

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

of the ministry of the Church, it is still common to insist on the necessity of a Divine "call" to the ministry.[1]

¶ There is nothing that man does that finds its beginning within itself, but everything, every work of every trade, of every occupation, is simply the utterance of some one of those great forces which lie behind all life, and in the various ways of the different generations and of the different men are always trying to make their mark upon the world. Behind the power that the man exercises there always lies the great power of life, the continual struggle of Nature to write herself in the life and work of man, the power of beauty struggling to manifest itself, the harmony that is always desiring to make itself known. To the merchant there are the great laws of trade, of which his works are but the immediate expression. To the mechanic there are the continual forces of Nature, gravitation uttering itself in all its majesty, made no less majestic because it simply takes its expression for the moment in some particular exercise of his art. To the ship that sails upon the sea there are the everlasting winds that come out of the treasuries of God and fulfil His purpose in carrying His children to their destination. There is no perfection of the universe until it comes to this.[2]

¶ I confess to you that though, like St. Paul, I desire to magnify my own office, I am often filled with deep admiration for the life and calling of a Christian man of business. His special trials and temptations are not mine; and, though a minister has his own temptations and trials, he sometimes feels, as he stands before his congregation and looks round upon them and thinks of all the struggles and defeats and victories of their daily life, like one who is standing quietly on the safe shore, while others are desperately battling with the stormy sea. I remember a morning, some years ago, when I happened to be staying with a friend in a great fishing station in the north of Scotland. A gale had sprung up suddenly, and we went down to the breakwater to watch the fleet of fishing-boats as they came running back for shelter. What admiration one felt at the way in which they breasted and buffeted the waves, and at the nerve and skill displayed by each crew in turn, as they drew near to the narrow entrance which was their one chance of escape, and shot safely at last through the harbour mouth into the quiet haven. Even such is the admiration with which one often looks upon Christian courage and consistency and victory in the life of a business man.[3]

[1] R. W. Dale. [2] P. Brooks, *Addresses*, 53. [3] J. C. Lambert.

4. *Be prepared for sacrifice.*—We need not believe all that the pessimists say about the conditions of success in business. We must not think that the business world is entirely organized in the interests of the devil. We must not think that honest men are sure to fail, and unscrupulous men bound to succeed. That is simply not true. At the same time, if we determine to carry Christ's law with us into all the transactions of a business career, we must be prepared for sacrifice.

If we have in the least degree entered into the spirit of that sacred life, that Divine Life, the life of Jesus Christ on earth, we shall not need to be taught that the law of sacrifice is the fundamental law of the Christian life. His whole life was a sacrifice. To come to this earth of ours, to pass through infancy and boyhood, to lead the life of a peasant, and then to be a wandering teacher and prophet, without a place where He might lay His head, and finally to go through the mockings and scourgings, and to die on the Cross for us—this was the consummation, as it is the perfect example, of self-sacrifice. And it is for this that men love and worship and serve Him; by this He has put a new spirit into the world and not only has given us an example that we should follow His steps, but has proved that thus, and thus only, is the world healed and purified and taught. The law of sacrifice is supreme and binding on all Christians. It is the salvation of the world.

¶ If any one says that in business one cannot be a Christian because it would involve loss to be so, I ask what right has he to expect that any special department of life, such as business, shall be exempt from the operation of a law which governs the whole. Of course it will involve at times a sacrifice and a loss to do the right thing, and I do not see how any Christian can expect anything else. The sacrifice must be made, the loss borne, as cheerfully and courageously as we should expect an officer to hear the summons to a post of danger or of death. This is the necessary correlative and consequence of regarding business as a vocation, and as an honourable service of men.[1]

¶ If a magistrate or a policeman could carry out justice only at much personal risk and loss, we expect him to do it. If an officer or a clergyman is called to harder work and smaller pay, we expect him to undertake it. It may not be compulsory, it

[1] J. M. Wilson.

may not always be done; but we expect it. We recognize such conduct as right, and the refusal as wrong. Now, we ought to regard all forms of business not only as a vocation, but also as a public service, and transfer to it something of the same feeling of honour and obligation that we associate with other public services.[1]

[1] J. M. Wilson.

Outward, Inward, Christward.

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OUTWARD, INWARD, CHRISTWARD.

In diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.—Rom xii. 11.

THE position that the portion of Holy Scripture from which these words are taken occupies, gives to the words special significance. In the Epistle to the Romans they come as presenting the practical aspect of that truth which in the first eleven chapters the Apostle sets forth in all the depth and breadth and height of the great mystery of godliness.

In the first eleven chapters of the Epistle he seeks to justify the ways of God to man. It is a vindication of the righteousness of God seen through man's failures; and so he traces the fall of man from his original righteousness, the corruption of the world, the debasement of its idolatries, the seeming failure of God's purpose, even of the law that was given by Moses, and in the election of God's people Israel. He does not flinch from facing any one of the great problems of God's government of the world —its anomalies, its disappointments, its frustrations of the grace of God; the creature made subject to vanity, man losing the image of God in which he was created; Israel outcast and rejected —but he shows through all these ruins the increasing purpose of the Divine mercy as well as of the Divine righteousness. The ways of God are inscrutable and past finding out, but they are the ways of a boundless compassion and of a perfect justice. So it will be seen at last (that is the conclusion to which he comes) that the purpose of God shall not fail; that evil shall not triumph over good; that love and not hatred is the law of God's universe; that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

Then the Apostle passes from that high mystery of doctrine to the practical aspect of the Christian life. Good is to prevail in man's life, in the life of each individual Christian whom God

has called; and in spite of the problems which beset the intellect it is to be a life of holiness and peace and purity. Justification by faith is not to lead to an Antinomian carelessness about obedience, and righteousness, and truth, and purity, and honesty; it does not set aside the law, yea it establishes the law.

The text is a short summary of the Christian life. That life has three relationships: to the world around us, to our own heart within us, to Christ above us; and here there is a word for each. "In diligence not slothful"—that is the duty we owe to the world; "fervent in spirit"—that is the duty we owe to ourselves; "serving the Lord"—that is what we owe to Christ. We might paraphrase the text: "Do good diligently; be good enthusiastically; and let all service, outward and inward, be for the Lord."

I.

Outward.

"In diligence not slothful."

The language of the Authorized Version is "Not slothful in business"; and it comes to most of us as an exhortation to be industrious in our earthly callings. It is the word for a prosperous banker, an enterprising merchant, a tradesman who tries to make the most of his capital or his labour, a labouring man whose task is humble, but who has to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and seeks to gain a fair day's wages for a fair day's labour. Well, doubtless, that lies within the scope and compass of the text; but if our thoughts are limited to that interpretation of it, we take altogether a poor, unsatisfying estimate of what the Apostle means, we lose more than one-half at least of the instruction and guidance it may give us. For the business of which the Apostle speaks is not the thing which a man does, but the temper, the motive, the character which accompany the doing of it. It is the temper of activity, of earnestness, and of thoroughness which a man may carry into his outward work.

¶ The Authorized Version receives much credit for the melody of its words, but perhaps less than it deserves for their accuracy. Here the word "business" is taken in the modern sense of trade,

and when it is found that that is not the meaning of the Greek, the Authorized Version is credited with a mistranslation. But in the sixteenth century "business" was used in the sense of "busyness," that is, activity or diligence in whatever one is engaged in—just the meaning of the Greek word.

The word translated "business" in the Authorized Version is the same in the original as the word "diligence" in the eighth verse of the chapter: "He that ruleth, with diligence." So here: "Not slothful as regards diligence." The term indicates, not the kind of work to be done, but simply the manner of doing it. It does not point to men's ordinary worldly callings and occupations, as distinguished from their spiritual exercises or spiritual frames. It is not the Apostle's present object to harmonize, and reconcile, and blend the two in one. The expression "business" characterizes, not the work but the worker, not the action but the agent. The real meaning is, that in respect of diligence, or activity, in the matter to which this whole passage refers, you are to be not slothful. It is very much the wise man's maxim: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. ix. 10).

Looking to the whole context of the verse, looking to the whole tenor and life of the Apostle, we may be sure that he meant those to whom he wrote to think chiefly of the spheres of Christian activity which were open to them, to each of them according to the gift that he had received—the gift of prophecy, ministration, helps and governments, diversities of tongues, gifts of healing, and the like. Spiritual activity, rather than secular activity, was what was in the Apostle's thoughts. Primarily, at least, the words are addressed to those who are engaged in the sphere of Christian activity. But it will be serviceable to give the words a wider range and let them refer to our work in the world, and describe the manner in which our duty should be done: "As for our diligence in doing our duty, let us not be slothful—let us really do it diligently."

1. We all know what this means in any worldly calling; and we know also that in every worldly calling it is an indispensable condition of eminence and success. There must be industry; strenuous, unremitting, untiring industry; willingness to forgo

the luxury of ease, "to scorn delights, and live laborious days." For the most part, this is a faculty to be acquired; a habit to be cultivated. It is a faculty which cannot be acquired too early; a habit which cannot be cultivated too assiduously. It is good advice, and advice which cannot be too often or too emphatically repeated, especially to the young: Learn this lesson soon, and learn it well. Accustom yourself, train yourself to this "diligence in business." Do this systematically in whatever you undertake. Act upon the principle that whatever it is worth while to acquire, it is worth while to acquire thoroughly; whatever it is worth while to do at all, it is worth while to do well.

This text is in perfect harmony with other parts of Scripture. St. Paul in writing his second letter to the Thessalonians (iii. 10) says, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." The evil complained of here began to show itself even while the Apostle was with the Church. Some were idlers, and they needed the earnest words of St. Paul to rebuke them and incite them to labour. He was himself a remarkable example of industry. Often did he spend the day in preaching and teaching, and then labour far into the night at his "craft" for support, rather than be dependent on the bounty of others. He becomes righteously indignant at the Thessalonian idlers, and he declares that neither should they eat. They were not to be supported by the charity of others, unless they had done all they could for their own support. This was a common maxim among the Jews; and the same sentiment is often found in the writings of Greek poets, orators, and philosophers. The maxim is in harmony with strict justice. At the very dawn of human history we are taught that man was to earn his bread in the sweat of his face. A man who will not work ought to starve. You ought not to help him. Aid given to a lazy man is a premium on vice.

¶ "Africa is the land of the unemployed," Henry Drummond says in his *Tropical Africa*. This saying is true only regarding the men. "What is the first commandment?" a Lovedale boy was asked. "Thou shalt do no work," was the reply.[1]

¶ Not often did Watts take subjects for his paintings from the stern realities of everyday life. But there is a small group of

[1] *Stewart of Lovedale*, 207.

pictures in which the sorrows and privations of those who have been worsted in the battle of life, or have been less fortunate than their fellows, are portrayed with unusual power, and show how wide is the range of his sympathies. Nothing human is alien to him. The pencil that could give a glow of vivid colour to the mystic visions of fancy could paint in sombre hues the painful experiences of the poor. He has combined, as it were, the two capacities in the humorous picture entitled, "When Poverty comes in at the door, Love flies out at the window." To this popular proverb he has given a realistic and yet an imaginative charm. The picture at once impresses the mind and makes its meaning plain. One side of it is illumined with a bright light emblematical of the happiness that has been but is now passing away. The room is poorly furnished, and yet exhibits traces of former abundance that redeem its squalidness. The secret of the change of circumstances in the household is revealed in the laziness and slovenliness of the mistress. Instead of diligently attending to her domestic affairs, she is absorbed in caressing a pet dove, and lounging on a bed, whose disordered clothes exhibit the careless housekeeping of many days. Her work-basket is overturned on the floor, and its contents are scattered. Doves make their nests in pigeon-holes above the bed, with all their litter of confusion, and from the open window the untended sprays of roses, returning to their wild condition through neglect, creep in. The housewife is young and beautiful; but whatever pleasing impression she produces is at once removed by the contradictory character of her slovenly habits. She cannot make a happy home; and therefore the door of the room on one side is represented as opening, admitting the sordid figure of Poverty, dressed in rags, and accompanied by the gaunt wolf of Hunger, and letting in at the same time the cold inclement wind outside, which blows before it a drift of withered autumn leaves that strew the floor, and speak eloquently of the hostile forces of nature which inevitably work havoc where there is no principle of order and industry to keep them in check; while through the wide-open window the winged Cupid, no longer a boy but a grown-up mature youth, is in the act of taking flight over the sill. Every detail of the picture tells, and enhances the effect of the whole; and no one can gaze upon the startling contrast between the dark forbidding figure of Poverty, and the bright affrighted look of Love, without reading the moral which it so forcibly teaches. Watts could not possibly have taught a more impressive lesson to all who are inclined to act the part of the young woman whose own improvident ways have made her the subject of experiment by two such antagonistic powers, Poverty

approaching to overwhelm her, and Love abandoning her to its horrors.[1]

¶ Life without industry is guilt; and industry without art is brutality.[2]

¶ There is no cure for the despair and the nervous misery from which so many among us are suffering like a long and steady piece of hard work. Work reacts on the worker. If it is slovenly it makes him slovenly, even in his outward appearance. If he does it, not with any love, but merely as drudgery, it gives him the careless look of drudgery. "To scamp your work will make you a scamp." On the contrary, when work is well done it yields its reward long before pay-day comes round, because it communicates solidity and dignity to the character. I do not know any man who is more to be envied than the man who has an eye

> That winces at false work, and loves the true;
> With hand and arm that play upon the toil
> As willingly as any singing-bird
> Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
> Because he likes to sing, and likes the song.[3]

2. It is this real work, this earnest life, that the Apostle desires to see exemplified in the Church of Christ, and among its members. It is thus that He would have them to undertake and prosecute the work of their Christian calling, to perform the functions of whatever they may find to be their office in the Church, the body of Christ, of which they are members. No doubt there is here a peculiar difficulty, arising out of the nature of that work and these functions. They are essentially spiritual. They make a demand upon the spiritual tendencies and tastes. In any circumstances, the faculty or habit which is required is difficult of acquisition. Still, there are certain qualities which are essential to worldly success, and if we carry them over into the life of the spirit we shall find that they are there also the secrets of progress in Christian usefulness.

(1) Here is a quality which is greatly esteemed in the ways of the world—the quality of *alertness*. It is characteristic of every successful merchant. If we listen to the ordinary speech of the man of the world, we find how great is the value which he places upon this gift. "A man must have all his wits

[1] Hugh Macmillan, *G. F. Watts*, 214. [2] Ruskin. [3] J. Stalker.

about him." "It is the early bird that catches the worm." These are recognized maxims in the way of success, and they point to the commanding necessity of an alert spirit. A merchant must be alert for the detection of hidden perils. He must be alert for the perception of equally hidden opportunity. He must be alert for the recognition of failing methods. His eyes must clearly see where old roads are played out, and where new ground may be broken. Let us carry the suggestion over into the affairs of the Kingdom. The Scriptures abound in counsel to alertness. "Awake, awake!" "Watch ye!" "Let us watch and be sober!" "Watching unto prayer." It is an all-essential ingredient in the life of the progressive saint.

¶ The watchfulness which Jesus Christ commands is a faithful care to love always and to fulfil the will of God at the present moment, according to the indications we have of it; it does not consist in worrying ourselves, in putting ourselves to torture, and in being ceaselessly occupied with ourselves, but rather in lifting our eyes to God, from whence comes our only help against ourselves.[1]

¶ "Buy up the opportunity." We are especially to look at things that appear to be useless, lest they turn out to be the raw material of the garments of heaven. Sir Titus Salt, walking along the quay of Liverpool, saw a pile of unclean waste. He saw it with very original eyes, and had the vision of a perfected and beautified product. He saw the possibilities in discarded refuse, and he bought the opportunity. That is perhaps the main business of the successful citizen of the Kingdom—the conversion of waste. This disappointment which I have had to-day, what can I make out of it? What an eye it wants to see the ultimate gain in checked and chilled ambition—

> To stretch a hand through time, and catch
> The far-off interest of tears.

This grief of mine, what can I make of it? Must I leave it as waste in the track of the years, or can it be turned into treasure? This pain of mine, is it only a lumbering burden, or does the ungainly vehicle carry heavenly gold? It is in conditions of this kind that the spiritual expert reveals himself. He is all "alive unto God," and seeing the opportunity he seizes it like a successful merchant.[2]

[1] Fénelon. [2] J. H. Jowett.

(2) Again, we hear one man say of another who has risen to fortune: "Everything about him goes like clockwork." Of another man whose days witness a gradual degeneracy quite another word is spoken: "He has no system, no method; everything goes by the rule of chance." So the quality of *method* appears to be one of the essentials of a successful man of affairs. Is this equally true in the things of the Kingdom? How many there are of us who, in our religious life, are loose, slipshod, unmethodical! How unsystematic we are in our worship and our prayers! Our worldly business would speedily drop into ruin if we applied to it the inconsiderate ways with which we discharge the duties of our religion.

¶ William Law, in *A Serious Call*, has instructed us in methodical devotion. He systematically divides the day, devoting to certain hours and certain seasons special kinds of praises and prayers. This was the early glory of the Methodist denomination. Their distinctiveness consisted in the systematic ordering of the Christian life. I know that too much method may become a bondage, but too little may become a rout. Too much red tape is creative of servitude, but to have no red tape at all is to be the victim of disorder.

¶ Without method memory is useless Detached facts are practically valueless. All public speakers know the value of method. Persons not accustomed to it imagine that a speech is learnt by heart. Knowing a little about the matter, I will venture to say that if any one attempted that plan, either he must have a marvellous memory, or else he would break down three times out of five. It simply depends upon correct arrangement. The words and sentences are left to the moment; the thoughts are methodized beforehand; and the words, if the thoughts are rightly arranged, will place themselves.[1]

¶ In order to do the most we are capable of, the first rule is that every day should see its own work done. Let the task for each day be resolved and arranged for deliberately the night before, and let nothing interfere with its performance. It is a secret which we learn slowly—the secret of living by days. I am convinced that there are very few so precious. What confuses work, what mars life and makes it feverish, is the postponing of the task which ought to be done now. The word which John Ruskin had on his seal was "To-day."[2]

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 389.

[2] Claudius Clear, *Letters on Life*, 163.

(3) Go once more into the realm of business. Here is a sentence that encounters us from one who knows the road: "The habit of firm *decision* is indispensable to a man of business." The real business man waits till the hour is come, and then acts decisively. He strikes while the iron is hot. An undecisive business man lives in perpetual insecurity. He meanders along in wavering uncertainty until his business house has to be closed. Is not this element of decision needful in the light of the Spirit? Religious life is too apt to be full of "ifs" and "buts" and "perhapses" and "peradventures." Am I experiencing at this moment a fervent holy spiritual impulse? In what consists my salvation? To strike while the iron is hot! "Suffer me first to go to bid them farewell." No, the iron will speedily grow cold. While the holy thing glows before you, strongly decide and concentrate your energies in supporting your decision. "I am resolved what to do." That was said by a man of the world. Let it be the speech of the man of the Kingdom of God.

¶ "We must think again," says Hazlitt, "before we determine, and thus the opportunity for action is lost. While we are considering the very best possible mode of gaining an object, we find that it has slipped through our fingers, or that others have laid rude, fearless hands upon it."

A man can learn but what he can:
Who hits the moment is the man.

¶ Lord Bacon has noticed, says the author of *Friends in Council*, that the men whom powerful persons love to have about them are ready men—men of resource. The reason is obvious. A man in power has perhaps thirty or forty decisions to make in a day. This is very fatiguing and perplexing to the mind. Any one, therefore, who can assist him with ready resource and prompt means of execution, even in the trifling matters of the day, soon becomes an invaluable subordinate, worthy of all favour.[1]

(4) And once more we find that in business life it is essential that a man must run risks and make ventures. He must be daring, and he must have the element of *courage*. What says the man of the world? "Nothing venture, nothing win." "Faint heart never won fair lady." Faint heart never wins anything John Bunyan's Faintheart had repeatedly to be carried. Has the

[1] A. Helps, *Friends in Council*.

citizen of the Kingdom to risk anything? Indeed he has. He must risk the truth. A lie might appear to offer him a bargain, but he must risk the truth. Let him sow the truth, even though the threatened harvest may be tears. Let him venture the truth, even though great and staggering loss seems to be drawn to his door. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." A man has again and again to make his choice between Christ and thirty pieces of silver. Let him make the venture, let the silver go; risk the loss! If it means putting up the shutters he will go out with Christ! "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

¶ The Christian belief that all is in God's hands, and all things work together for good, throws a new light on all the trivialities of life. All our petty occupations may be affected by the ultimate hope which we are taught to cherish. "Labour," says Bishop Andrewes (*Sermons*, ii. 206), "of itself is a harsh, unpleasant thing unless it be seasoned with hope. . . . 'He that plows must plow in hope,' his plough shall not go deep else, his furrows will be but shallow. Sever hope from labour and you must look for labour and labourers accordingly, slight and shallow, God knoweth."[1]

Passage, immediate passage! the blood burns in my veins!
Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!
Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?
Have we not grovell'd here long enough eating and drinking
like mere brutes?
Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long
enough?

Sail forth—steer for the deep waters only,
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O my brave soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther, farther sail![2]

[1] W. Cunningham, *The Gospel of Work*, 71.
[2] Walt Whitman, *The Sea of Faith*.

II.

INWARD.

"Fervent in spirit."

We pass from the outward activity of life to the inward spring, to the motive power, out of which this outward activity must flow, and without which it flags and falls.

"Fervent in spirit"—What is it but to be glowing, boiling, we might almost say boiling over, with a strong purpose, with a perfect love, with a twofold love—the love of God who has made, redeemed, and sanctified us, and the love of men, our brothers, because they are children of the same Father in Heaven? It is hardly more than a paraphrase of St. Paul's words to say that what he bids us do is, in homely phrase, to keep the steam up; that steam of the Divine love which moves the whole machine of our spiritual life, without which it may be in perfect outward order, but will not go, will not work, will not do that for which the great Work-master designed the machine. Here, then, is another golden rule of life, that outward activity must be sustained by the inward fervour, by the glow of emotion, by the life of prayer.

> What man can live denying his own soul?
> Hast thou not learned that noble uncontrol
> Is virtue's right, the breath by which she lives?
> O sure, if any angel ever grieves,
> 'Tis when the living soul hath learnt to chide
> Its passionate indignations, and to hide
> The sudden flows of rapture, the quick birth
> Of overwhelming loves, that balance the worth
> Of the wide world against one loving act,
> As less than a sped dream; shall the cataract
> Stop, pause, and palter, ere it plunge towards
> The vale unseen? Our fate hath its own lords,
> Which if we follow truly, there can come
> No harm unto us.[1]

1. There are two forms which this Divine enthusiasm has assumed in religious souls—the enthusiasm for humanity, and the enthusiasm for individual salvation. The latter, which is

[1] Langdon Elwyn Mitchell.

the narrower and more selfish, which indeed is often "selfishness expanded to infinitude," has led to many errors. Men, ready to sacrifice everything to secure their own personal deliverance from what they had dreamed of hell, have lived as hermits in deserts or on mountains, or have shut themselves up in monastic cells, or have subjected their bodies to cruel torments. The beliefs that have led to such lives are natural to men. They are found in every age and in every country and in all religions; and deeply as they are intermingled with error, yet so sovereign are the virtues of self-denial that without doubt they shall have their reward. And sometimes, on the other hand, the enthusiasm for humanity has been dissevered from deep personal religion. We may be sure that God will still bless the sincere lovers of their brethren, and that Christ will never be hard on any man who has lived and died for men. But when the two have been combined, when the sense of devotion has been united with the exaltation of charity, then such men have ever been the most glorious and the most blessed of the benefactors of mankind. What was Christianity itself but such an enthusiasm learnt from the example, caught from the Spirit, of Christ our Lord? The same love, even for the guilty and wretched, which brought the Lord Jesus step by step from that celestial glory to the lowest depth of the infinite descent, has been kindled by His Spirit in the hearts of His noblest sons. Forgiven, they have longed that others should share the same forgiveness.

¶ Jesus of Nazareth is constantly kindling and keeping alive an enthusiastic personal devotion in the hearts of countless men, women, and children who have never seen Him—an enthusiasm which burns on steadily, century after century, with ever-increasing splendour. Let those who deny that He is still alive explain that marvellous Fact—if they can! It is unique in the history of our race. Could a man, dead for nearly two thousand years, rule so royally over the souls and bodies of the noblest and most unselfish of every age? NO! JESUS LIVES! and is ever pressing close to His Heart the heart of each individual disciple, pouring in the strengthening oil of the Holy Spirit and the new wine of a high enthusiasm which must find room for service.

> Come, my beloved! we will haste and go
> To those pale faces of our fellow-men!
> Our loving hearts, burning with summer fire,

Will cast a glow upon their pallidness;
Our hands will help them, far as servants may;
Hands are apostles still to saviour-hearts.

2. Enthusiasm is indispensable; there is nothing which the devil dreads so much, there is nothing which the world denounces so continuously. To call a man an enthusiast has often been regarded as the sneer most likely to thwart his plans. Like the words "Utopian," "Quixotic," "unpractical," it is one of the mud-banks reared by the world to oppose the swelling tide of moral convictions. The famous saying of Prince Talleyrand, "Above all, no enthusiasm!" concentrates the expression of the dislike felt by cold, calculating, selfish natures for those who are swept away by the force of mighty and ennobling aspirations.

For what is enthusiasm? It is a Greek word which means the fulness of Divine inspiration. It implies absorbing and passionate devotion for some good cause. It means the state of those whom St. Paul has described as "fervent (literally, 'boiling') in spirit." It describes the soul of man no longer mean and earthy, but transfigured, uplifted, dilated by the Spirit of God. When a man is an enthusiast for good, he is so because a Spirit greater than his own has swept over him, as the breeze wanders over the dead strings of some Æolian harp, and sweeps the music, which slumbers upon them, now into Divine murmurings, and now into stormy sobs. A man becomes an enthusiast when God has flashed into his conscience the conviction of right and truth; has made him magnetic to multitudes; has made him as a flame of fire which leaps out of dying embers; as a wind of God which breathes over the slain that they may live. Without enthusiasm of some noble kind a man is dead; without enthusiasts a nation perishes. Of each man it is true that in proportion to the fire of his enthusiasm is the grandeur of his life; of each nation it is true that without enthusiasm it never has the will, much less the power, to undo the heavy burden or to atone for the intolerable wrong.

¶ Let us think sometimes of the great invisible ship that carries our human destinies upon eternity. Like the vessels of our confined oceans, she has her sails and her ballast. The fear that she may pitch or roll on leaving the roadstead is no reason for increasing the weight of the ballast by stowing the fair, white

sails in the depths of the hold. They were not woven to moulder side by side with cobble-stones in the dark. Ballast exists everywhere: all the pebbles of the harbour, all the sand on the beach will serve for it. But sails are rare and precious things: their place is not in the murk of the well, but amid the light of the tall masts, where they will collect the winds of space.[1]

(1) Think what enthusiasm has done even in spheres not immediately religious. The enthusiasm of the *student*, of the *artist*, of the *discoverer*, of the *man of science*—what else could have inspired their infinite patience, their unlimited self-sacrifice? Men cannot without effort render great services to mankind. "The progress of mankind," it has been truly said, "has been from scaffold to scaffold and from stake to stake"; but men animated by a fine enthusiasm have braved the penalty. It plunged Roger Bacon into torture and imprisonment. It made Columbus face the sickly cruelty of ignorant priesthoods and the stormy hurricanes of unknown seas. It caused years of poverty, of suffering, of persecution, of calumnious denunciation to Galileo, to Kepler, to Newton, to the early geologists, to Charles Darwin. They gave to mankind a toil intense and infinite. And if in these days man has been enabled to

> put forth
> His pomp, his power, his skill,
> And arts that make fire, flood, and air,
> The vassals of his will,

it is only because his more gifted brethren have toiled for his good.

(2) Again, there is the enthusiasm of the *reformer*. Think how low the nations might have sunk if their decadence had not been again and again arrested, and their criminalities again and again rebuked. Think what Italy was fast becoming when Savonarola—until they choked his voice in blood—thundered in the Duomo of Florence against her corruptions and her apostasy! Think how the cramp of an intolerable tyranny might still have been torturing the souls of men had not Wyclif braved death to give the Bible to the English people! Think once more what truths would have been drowned in the deep seas of oblivion if

[1] Maurice Maeterlinck, *Life and Flowers*, 76.

John Hus had not calmly gone to the stake to which he was condemned by the bishops who surrounded the perjured Sigismund! Imagine what a sink of loathly abominations the nominal Church of God might now have been if the voice of Luther had never shaken the world.

(3) Again, there is the enthusiasm of the *missionary*. In the first centuries the world was full of missionaries. In those days every Christian felt that he was not a Christian if he were not in some form or other God's missionary. And for centuries the Church produced many a noble missionary; men like Ulfilas, men like Boniface, men like Columba. Then began the ages of neglect, and darkness, and superstition, and for whole centuries there was found only here and there a man like St. Louis of France, or St. Francis of Assisi, with a mission spirit strong within him. In modern days it is to Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians, to William Carey and the Baptists that we owe the revival of missionary zeal. In the last century missions were regarded as foolish, rash—one knows not what; for the devil has a large vocabulary of words to quench the spirit which is so dangerous to his domain. Yet men despised and defied the devil, and the world which is his minion. Think of John Eliot, the lion-hearted apostle of the Indians, and his motto, "Prayer and painstaking can accomplish anything." Think of the young and sickly David Brainerd, going alone into the silent forests of America, and among their yet wilder denizens, with the words, "Not from necessity, but from choice; for it seemed to me God's dealings towards me had fitted me for a life of solitariness and hardness." Think of Adoniram Judson and the tortures he bore so cheerfully in his Burmese prison.

(4) Then, once more, think of the glowing and beautiful enthusiasm of our *social philanthropists*. What man has done more for a multitude of souls than John Pounds, the poor Portsmouth cobbler, who, in the simple enthusiasm of ignorant love for the poor ragged children of the streets, became the ultimate founder of Ragged Schools! What a light from heaven was shed upon countless wanderers by the Gloucestershire printer, Robert Raikes, who saw the children wasting their Sundays idly in the streets. On the Embankment in London you see his statue and read the inscription: "As I asked, 'Can nothing be done?' a

voice answered 'Try'; I did try, and lo! what God hath wrought." Who can judge the amount of misery rolled off the despairing heart of the world by the reformers of prisons, John Howard and Elizabeth Fry—Elizabeth Fry entering the foul wards for women in Newgate Prison, protected only by the beauty of her holiness; and John Howard traversing Europe, as Edmund Burke said, "to dive into the depths of dungeons, to plunge into the infections of hospitals, to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt"?

¶ All I am anxious for is that sympathy should be felt, or rather candour extended, towards the exaggerations of generous and unselfish men like Kingsley, whose warmth, even when wrong, is a higher thing than the correctness of cold hearts. It is so rare to find a clergyman who can forget the drill and pipeclay of the profession, and speak with a living heart for the suffering classes, not as a policeman established to lecture them into proprieties, but as one of the same flesh and blood vindicating a common humanity.[1]

3. The idea suggested by the word "fervent" is that of water heated to the boiling point. The figure is common in poetry and rhetoric. We speak of a man boiling with resentment; boiling over with rage. And the more generous and gentle affections, as well as the fiercer passions, are represented as working in this way. A patriot's soul boils over with indignation at his country's wrongs. A kind heart boils over with compassion when it sees a brother's woe. Warmth, enthusiasm, zeal; amounting even, if there be occasion, to passionate grief, or pity, or anger—such is the frame or temperament here commended. The fervency, however, is to be spiritual. It is not animal excitement. It is not the natural fire of fervency of a hot and heady temper; or of keen, nervous sensibility and susceptibility; or of vehement personal feeling, unaccustomed to self-control.

(1) The meaning may be, that we are to be fervent in our spirit; fervent in the spiritual part of our nature; fervent in that new spiritual life and being of ours into which, as members of Christ and of His body, we enter. We are spiritual men. It is as spiritual men, and not merely as business men, that we are called to undertake offices and functions in the Church—to work

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 292.

in, and with, and for Christ. Let ours be not a cold or lukewarm spirituality, but a spirituality that is hot and boiling.

(2) On the other hand, it may be maintained that it is the Holy Spirit, as personally dwelling in us, that is meant. "Fervent in the Spirit" is an exact rendering of the original. But in fact the two renderings are at one: fervent in spirit; fervent in the Spirit. The fervency is, in every view of it, spiritual. It is so, inasmuch as it is fervency, not in the natural, but in the spiritual part of us; fervency working in us, not as carnal, but as spiritual. And it is so also because it is fervency wrought in us by the Holy Spirit.

4. The fervency, then, is to be spiritual. It is to have its seat in the heart's core of our spiritual life; it is to be the direct fruit of the Spirit there.

(1) To be fervent in spirit is something more than mere earnestness. Doing the work simply as a matter of business, we may do it very earnestly, taking a real interest in it, throwing our whole soul into it. But the interest which we take in it may be such as we might take in any employment that stimulated our activity and gave scope for the exercise of our natural sensibility. We may throw our soul into it, as into some heroic enterprise or sentimental scheme that has power to charm by its novelty or fascinate by its romance. But the essential element of real spirituality may be wanting; and with much bustling stir and much boiling enthusiasm in what we take to be religious work and duty, we may still need to be affectionately warned that "to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

¶ It is not by becoming like Him that men will approach towards incorporation with Him; but by result of incorporation with Him, received in faith as a gift, and in faith adored, *and used*, that they will become like Him. It is by the imparted gift, itself far more than natural, of literal membership in Him; by the indwelling presence, the gradually disciplining and dominating influence, of His Spirit, which is His very Self within us, the inmost breath of our most secret being; that the power of His atoning life and death, which is the power of divinely victorious holiness, can grow to be the very deepest reality of ourselves.[1]

[1] R. C. Moberly.

¶ A distinction must be drawn between the gifts of God and the gift of God. The gifts are natural endowments, energy, strength, sagacity, powers of body, mind, and character, all of them bestowed upon man without his asking. The gift is the Divine fire, the Spirit of God Himself, the gift of life, which is bestowed only on such as ask for it. Without the gift, the gifts may be put to the very worst uses. They may be a curse to him who has them and to his fellows. But if the gift be added to the gifts, then the gifts, as St. Paul would say, become the arms of righteousness wielded in God's cause. The more abundant the gifts, the richer the gift. The gift cannot create the gifts, it can only sanctify them. St. Peter had always been confident, vigorous, intrepid, fervid, and clear-sighted; St. Paul always logical, original, fiery, indomitable. They were both in nature leaders of men. When to these gifts the gift was added, St. Peter could not become a zealot, St. Paul could no longer remain a persecutor. They must work for God; they could not work against God.[1]

¶ The man of the last generation who of all men did most to reinvigorate the life of the English Church, although he died outside her communion, lets out the secret of his fertile and lasting influence when he relates how the thought grew upon him and possessed him, "that deliverance is wrought, not by the many, but by the few, not by bodies, but by persons," and how from his schooldays onwards he loved and prized more every day the motto he had chosen as his own—"Exoriare aliquis."

(2) The very first condition of this spiritual fervency is that clear insight into the Divine method of peace, or that belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, which casts out self-righteousness, self-seeking, and self-esteem. Then those old natural fires, which, when fanned by winds from the spiritual region, make the heart and bosom burn, are extinguished and die out. There is no room now for the feelings of keen self-torture, or hot and heady self-elation, which once by turns inflamed the unsteadfast soul. New fires are kindled; feelings of an entirely new kind come in to occupy the place of the expelled. Far more gentle are they, far more calm! and yet how warm, how steadily and uniformly warm! For the source of them continues always the same. That source is Christ; Christ living in us—"Christ in us, the hope of glory."

¶ I took this cutting from a newspaper the other day. "A

[1] W. G. Rutherford.

vicar tried last winter, in his attempt to win the man in the street, twelve concerts, twenty dances, six lectures, three Christmas-trees, and several other things, and all in vain." I think that parish might try a real novelty—the Gospel. I am persuaded of this, that the energy the Lord is going to use is the energy of the Spirit.[1]

III.

CHRISTWARD.

"Serving the Lord."

"Serving the Lord"—this is the supreme motive of the Christian life. Some think that the word "Spirit" may have suggested "Lord," which here refers not to the Father, but to Christ. There is another reading, "serving the opportunity," as the Greek words for "Lord" and "time" (or season, opportunity) are very much alike. But a great balance of manuscript authority is in favour of the reading "Lord." And, apart from the weight of authority on the side of the accepted text, the other reading seems to give a very incomplete climax to the Apostle's thought, while it breaks entirely the sequence which is discernible in it. In this, the closing member of the triplet, St. Paul suggests a thought which will be stimulus to the diligence and fuel to the fire that makes the spirit boil. In effect he says, "Think, when your hands begin to droop, and when your spirits begin to be cold and indifferent, and languor to steal over you, and the paralysing influences of the commonplace and the familiar and the small begin to assert themselves, think that you are serving the Lord." Will that not freshen you up? Will that not set you boiling again? Will it not be easy to be diligent when you feel that you are "ever in the great Taskmaster's eye"?

1. But what is meant by "serving the Lord"? It means in the first place that our work for Christ is not work that is voluntarily undertaken by us, but work that is imposed on us by a Master.

It is true that, as in Isaiah's case, the Lord may seem to put it to ourselves to come forward for His service of our own accord.

[1] Harrington Lees.

In great kindness and condescension He allows us the satisfaction of offering ourselves as volunteers. Our engagement with Him is to have the grace, or graceful aspect, of being not so much a stern command on His part, leaving us no alternative but to enlist, but, rather, in the first instance, a spontaneous act on our part, hastening to place ourselves and our services at His disposal. But let us notice two things.

(1) To one dealt with as Isaiah was dealt with, the very hearing, or as it were the overhearing by accident, of that voice of the Lord, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" has all the force of a command. He must feel that the very idea of that Holy One, by whom he has first been so wonderfully humbled, and then lifted up, having work to be done, errands to be executed, lays him under an obligation to say, "Here am I." He has absolutely no alternative here, any more than if the most peremptory order had been issued. He is very thankful for the generous consideration which allows him to have the pleasure of volunteering; but he cannot on that account imagine for a moment that he has really any discretion in the matter, or any right to hesitate or hang back.

¶ The right Christians are those who fear God, and work with a light joyful heart; because they recognize God's command and will. A good Christian peasant sees inscribed on his waggon and plough—a shoemaker on his leather and awl, a smith and carpenter on his wood and iron—this verse, "Happy art thou. It is well with thee." The world reverses this, and says, "Wretched art thou, it is evil with thee, for thou must ever bear and carry; but happy are those who live in idleness, and have what they want, without labour."[1]

¶ What can God do for a lazy Christian, who is disloyal to His purposes and the needs of the perishing? While thus treating God and men there can be no deep personal spiritual life or growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Such people often say to me, "Each time you come to us you seem to be mightily enjoying the religion you preach to us." "Yes," I reply, "I *do* enjoy my religion, twenty-four hours per day and three hundred and sixty-five days per year." "Well," they say, "I am often so cold and dead that I hardly know whether or not I have any religion at all." When I ask them if they do any work for Christ and the saving and blessing

[1] Luther.

of men, they usually answer me with a long-drawn-out "Well no." "Then," I always say, "you deserve to starve."[1]

Come weary-eyed from seeking in the night
Thy wanderers strayed upon the pathless wold,
Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for light,
And cannot find their fold.

And deign, O Watcher with the sleepless brow,
Pathetic in its yearning—deign reply:
Is there, O is there aught that such as Thou
Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briars across Thy pathway thrust?
Are there no thorns that compass it about?
Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign to trust
My hands to gather out?

O, if Thou wilt, and if such bliss might be,
It were a cure for doubt, regret, delay—
Let my lost pathway go—what aileth me?—
There is a better way.[2]

(2) And then, secondly, when his offer is accepted, and he is taken at his word, he is clearly now a servant under the yoke. He is not at liberty to decline any work that may be assigned to him, however difficult and laborious, however perilous and painful to flesh and blood. It may be different from what he anticipated; not so pleasant, not so honourable. But what of that? When he offered himself, he asked no questions; he had no right to ask any. He stipulated for no conditions; it would have been unbelief to do so. Unreservedly he said, "Whatsoever be the errand, here am I; send me." And he cannot qualify his offer, or attempt to make terms, now. Nor is this all. Not only must he undertake, as a servant, whatever work the Lord appoints; he must go through with it as a servant. He must feel himself to be a servant, bound to do the work, be it what it may. He must feel himself to be a servant, from first to last, in the doing of it.

I asked Thee for a larger life:
Thou gavedst me
A larger measure of the strife
Men wage for Thee;

[1] T. Waugh, *Twenty-Three Years a Missioner*, 194. [2] Jean Ingelow.

And willed that where grey cares are rife
My place should be.

I asked Thee for the things that are
More excellent;
And prayed that nought on earth might mar
My heart's content:
And lo! a toilsome way and far
My feet were sent.

I asked Thee for a clearer view
To make me wise:
Thou saidst, "It is enough for you
To recognize
My voice"—and then the darkness grew
Before my eyes.

I asked that I might understand
The way of pain:
Thine answer was to take my hand
In Thine again;
Nor aught of all Thy love had planned
Didst Thou explain.

I asked Thee once that I might fill
A higher place:
Thine answer was, "O heart, be still,
And I will grace
Thy patience with some gift of skill
To serve the race."

And now I thank Thee for the prayer
Thou didst not hear;
And for the ministry of care,
The hour of fear,
For skies o'ercast, and places where
The way was drear.

For now I know that life is great
Not by the things
That make for peace, and all that Fate
Or Fortune flings
Down at my feet—for soon or late
These all take wings.

I do not ask what joys or woes
Time holds for me:
I simply seek a love that goes
Out unto Thee,
As surely as the river flows
To meet the sea.[1]

2. Is not this a lowering of the whole tone and style of our intercourse with the Lord, and our engagement for His work? After all seemed to be placed on the footing of a large and free commerce of love and confidence; when the adjustment of the whole question of our standing with God, and our relation to Him, had been taken out of the hands of law, and out of the category of legal bargaining, and transferred to a higher region, in which grace and honour reign; are we again to come down to the level of servants? Yes, and hired servants too. And why should this offend us? It did not offend Christ when He was doing His Father's work on earth. He did it as a servant, even as a hired servant, when He "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame."

Our Master all the work hath done
He asks of us to-day;
Sharing his service, every one
Share too his sonship may.
Lord, I would serve and be a son;
Dismiss me not, I pray.[2]

3. Finally, obligation and responsibility are not badges of degradation. On the contrary, for intelligent creatures, on a right footing with their Creator, they are elements and conditions of highest glory and purest joy. Angels in heaven now work as servants; nay, as hired servants; for He whom they serve will never accept service unrequited. They work as servants, under obligation; upon their responsibility. It is in that character and capacity that they are summoned to join in the universal song of praise: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure" (Ps. ciii. 20, 21). Saints in heaven hereafter

[1] Percy C. Ainsworth, *Poems and Sonnets*, 53.
[2] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 4.

will work in like manner; in fact, one chief element of heaven's blessedness and glory is this, that there "his servants shall serve him" (Rev. xxii. 3). And all our work here on earth, we will do the better if we do it, not as at our own hand, but as "serving the Lord."

If I knew it now, how strange it would seem,
To think, to know, ere another day
I should have passed over the silent way,
And my present life become as a dream;
But what if that step should usher me
Right into the sinless company
Of the saints in heaven.

I'll carefully watch the door of my lips
As I talk with my comrades to-day,
And think a little before I say,
To see that no careless expression slips,
Which I should find would so ill compare
With the holy converse uttered there,
By the saints in heaven.

If they let me in—Oh, how sweet, how strange,
The thought that before a new day dawn,
I may put the incorruptible on,—
That beautiful garment, the robe of change!
And walk and talk with that happy throng,
Perhaps join my voice in the "new, new song,"
With the saints in heaven.

But I fear I should be poorly meet
To mingle much with the saints at all;
My earthly service would seem so small—
Just going of errands on tired feet;
But, oh! how blest, if it were my share
To be the trusted messenger there,
For the saints in heaven!

With holy missives to take and bring,
Sometime, perhaps, it would come to be
That some pure saint would commission me
To carry his message straight to the King
And the King His answer would defer,
To turn and smile on the messenger
Of His saints in heaven![1]

[1] Anna Jane Grannis.

For the Battle.

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For the Battle.

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer. —Rom. xii. 12.

1. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing stedfastly in prayer. At first sight they are three separate injunctions. Let some whose lot has fallen in pleasant places rejoice; let others whose lot is dark suffer patiently; let still others devote themselves to continual prayer. Or musing on the exhortations the idea may come to us that they are a descending scale.

> If I have faltered more or less
> In my great task of happiness;
> If I have moved among my race
> And shown no glorious morning face;
> If beams from happy human eyes
> Have moved me not; if morning skies,
> Books, and my food, and summer rain
> Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—
> Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take
> And stab my spirit broad awake;
> Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
> Choose Thou, before that spirit die,
> A piercing pain, a killing sin,
> And to my dead heart run them in![1]

And if pain fails to waken my heart fully to God, let me cling humbly and continuously to prayer. Let me not fail of prayer so that at the end my spirit may be attuned to God's, and my life be not in vain.

2. But St. Paul, when he wrote these words, addressed them to the Christians of the Roman Church for whom he foresaw perse-

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Underwoods.*

cution in the near future, even if they were not suffering from it at this very time. And he would have them practise hope and patience and prayer in their persecution, and all at the same time.

¶ The old physicians tell us of two antidotes against poison, the hot and the cold, and they dilate upon the special excellence of each of these; in like manner the Apostle Paul gives us first the warm antidote, "rejoicing in hope," and then he gives us the cool antidote, "patient in tribulation." Either of these, or both together, will work wonderfully for the sustaining of the spirit; but it is to be observed that neither of these remedies can be taken into the soul unless it is mixed with a draught of prayer. Joy and patience are curative essences, but they must be dropped into a glass full of supplication, and then they will be wonderfully efficient.[1]

3. St. Paul's primary meaning in the word which is translated tribulation in our English version was persecution. But let us take tribulation in its usual sense of every kind of trial through which a man may have to pass. With this meaning let us see the dependence between the clauses and the possibility of the Christian following the three injunctions at the same time.

(1) "Rejoice in hope; be patient in tribulation." This is an utter impossibility to the man whose hope is of this world, and who looks for mere ordinary happiness. To him tribulation is the supreme obstacle to hope and joy. If he suffers he cannot be joyful; he loses his hope. But for the man who is full of Christ's hope all is different. "Hope, which comes to all, outwears the accidents of life, and reaches with tremulous hand beyond the grave and death." The Christian's hope alters his idea of tribulation. Poverty, that is tribulation enough. But the monk embraces a life of poverty and self-denial of his own free-will.

> Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
> And hermits are contented with their cells.

Poverty has lost its grimness. It wears a smiling face. But, further, though the tribulation may remain very real the Christian accepts it—nay, welcomes it—as helping him on his way. And because of his great abiding hope the tribulation is dwarfed.

¶ People may lay down their lives with cheerfulness in the sure expectation of a blessed immortality; but that is a different

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.

affair from giving up youth, with all its admirable pleasures, in the hope of a better quality of gruel in a more than problematical, nay, more than improbable, old age.[1]

(2) Now let us take the last two clauses together: "Continue stedfastly in prayer; be patient in tribulation." If we continue in prayer, does it follow that we shall be patient under trial? R. J. Campbell, in *A Faith for To-Day*, says: "I well remember the curious feeling with which I once encountered a man who prayed long and earnestly for a certain academic distinction—a distinction which could fall to one and one only. He was greatly chagrined and disappointed, and inclined to reproach God, when the honour went to another instead of himself. The earnestness of his prayers was unquestionable." But not so did St. Paul conceive of prayer. His model was the Master who in His agony said, "Thy will be done." So the Apostle would have these Roman Christians put themselves on God's side in their praying.

¶ And in all things he shall yield up his own will, saying and thinking in his heart, "Lord, I am as willing to be poor and without all those things of which Thou hast deprived me as I should be ready to be rich, Lord, if Thy will were so, and if in that state I might further Thy glory. It is not my natural will which must be done, but Thy will and the will of my spirit. Lord, I am thine, and I should be Thine as gladly in hell as in heaven, if in that way I could advance Thy glory. So then, O Lord, fulfil in me the good pleasure of Thy will."[2]

And with this spirit in prayer patience under trial will not be denied. "At this season the sun enters into the sign of Libra, for the day and night are equal, and light and darkness evenly balanced. Even so for the resigned soul Jesus Christ is in the sign of Libra; and whether He grants sweetness or bitterness, darkness or light, of whatever nature His gift may be, the man retains his balance, and all things are one to him, with the exception of sin, which has been driven out once for all." And the more steadfast the prayer the more will the link be strengthened which binds our soul to God, and the more grace we will receive to meet each need of life.

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Crabbed Age and Youth.*
[2] Maurice Maeterlinck, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics*, 135.

All trouble and anguish, loss and pain,
When they've done their task appointed,
Vanish and fade; it is joy that lasts.
The seer, with vision anointed,
Beholds the flash of a rising dawn,
Though the midnight skies are gray.
Patience, poor soul, with the present pain—
There cometh a better day.

I.

Rejoicing in Hope.

There are those who stigmatize Christianity as a religion of sorrow. They tell us that, like a bitter wind, it withers the flowers, that it says of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doeth it? They contrast it, still ignorantly, with the gay and careless humanism of the ancient world. They dare to say—

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from Thy breath.
We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fulness of death.

But this is not Christianity after the mind of the Apostle Paul. "Rejoice in hope," he says to the Roman Christians. It would be difficult to find a more decided expression of optimism. The cheery tone is never absent from St. Paul's speech. The buoyant and "springy" movement of his life is never changed. The light never dies out of his sky. Even the grey firmament reveals more hopeful tints, and becomes significant of evolving glory. The Apostle is an optimist, "rejoicing in hope," a child of light, wearing the "armour of light," "walking in the light," even as Christ is in the light.

Nor was this Apostolic optimism a thin and fleeting sentiment begotten of a cloudless summer day. It was not born of sluggish thinking or of idle and shallow observation. The first chapter of this Epistle to the Romans contains as dark and searching an indictment of our nature as the mind of man has ever drawn. Let us rehearse the appalling catalogue, that the radiance of the Apostle's optimism may appear the more abounding: "Senseless

hearts," "fools," "uncleanness," "vile passions," "reprobate minds," "unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful." With fearless severity the Apostle leads us through the black realms of midnight and eclipse. And yet in the subsequent reaches of the great argument, of which these dark regions form the preface, there emerges the clear, calm, steady light of this optimistic text.

What was the cause of this courageous and energetic optimism? What can we do to imitate it? We can choose what we will look at. We can choose our atmosphere like the people of Italy who in frosty weather will be seen sitting in the market-place by their stalls with a dish of embers, which they grasp in their hands, and so make themselves comfortably warm on the bitterest day.

St. Paul looked at three things:—

1. He fixed his eyes on *the Redemption of Christ.*—In all the spacious reaches of the Apostle's life the redemptive work of his Master is present as an atmosphere in which his thoughts and purposes and labours found their sustaining and enriching breath. Redemption was not degraded into a fine abstract argument, to which the Apostle had appended his own approval, and then, with sober satisfaction, had laid it aside, as a practical irrelevancy, in the stout chests of mental orthodoxy. It became the very spirit of his life. To him it was not a small device, an afterthought, a patched-up expedient to meet an unforeseen emergency. The redemptive purpose lay back in the abyss of the eternities; and in a spirit of reverent questioning the Apostle sent his trembling thoughts into those lone and silent fields. He emerged with whispered secrets such as these: "fore-knew," "fore-ordained," "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," "eternal life promised before times eternal," "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

¶ What a wonderful consciousness St. Paul has of the sweep and fulness of redemption. We know the variations of the glorious air: "the unsearchable riches of Christ"; "riches in

glory in Christ Jesus"; "all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ"; "the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering." And what is the resultant enfranchisement? Recall those wonderful sentences beginning with the words "But now." It is a phrase that heralds a great deliverance. "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested." "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God." "But now are ye light in the Lord." These represent no thin abstractions. To St. Paul the realities of which they speak were more real than the firm and solid earth. And is it any wonder that a man with such a magnificent sense of the reality of the redemptive work of Christ, who felt the eternal purpose throbbing in the dark backward and abyss of time, who conceived it operating upon our race in floods of grace and glory, and who realized in his own immediate consciousness the varied wealth of the resultant emancipation—is it any wonder that for this man a new day had dawned, and the birds had begun to sing and the flowers to bloom, and a sunny optimism had taken possession of his heart which found expression in an assured and rejoicing hope?[1]

2. St. Paul fixed his mind next on *the reality and greatness of his present resources.*—"By Christ redeemed"—yes, but that is only the Alpha and not the Omega of the work of grace. "By Christ redeemed; *in Christ restored.*" St. Paul's mental and spiritual outlook comprehended a great army of positive forces labouring in the interests of the Kingdom of God. Look at some of his auxiliaries: "Christ liveth in me." "Christ liveth in me! He breathes through all my aspirations. He thinks through all my thinking. He wills through all my willing. He loves through all my loving. He travails in all my labours. He works within me 'to will and to do of his good pleasure.'" That is the primary faith of the hopeful life. But see what follows in swift and immediate succession. "If Christ is in you, the spirit is life." "The spirit is life!" And therefore we find that in the Apostle's thought dispositions are powers. They are not passive entities. They are positive forces vitalizing and energizing the common life of men. To St. Paul love expressed more than a relationship. It was an energy productive of abundant labours. Faith was more than an attitude. It was an energy creative of mighty endeavour. Hope was more than a posture. It was an

[1] J. H. Jowett.

energy generative of a most enduring patience. All these are dynamics, to be counted as active allies, co-operating in the ministry of the Kingdom. And so the Epistles abound in the recital of mystic ministries at work. The Holy Spirit worketh! Grace worketh! Faith worketh! Love worketh! Prayer worketh! And there are other allies robed in less attractive garb. "Tribulation worketh!" "Godly sorrow worketh!"

¶ St. Paul never mentions the enemy timidly. He never seeks to underestimate his strength. Nay, again and again he catalogues all possible antagonisms in a spirit of buoyant and exuberant triumph. However numerous the enemy, however towering and well-established the iniquity, however black the gathering clouds, so sensitive is the Apostle to the wealthy resources of God that amidst it all he remains a sunny optimist, "rejoicing in hope," labouring in the spirit of a conqueror even when the world was exulting in his supposed discomfiture and defeat.

3. And, thirdly, he fixed his thoughts on *the wonder of the glory to come.*—Can we safely exile this thought from our moral and spiritual culture? We know that this particular contemplation is largely absent from modern religious life, and we know the nature of the recoil in which our present impoverishment began. "Let us hear less about the mansions of the blest, and more about the housing of the poor!" Men revolted against an effeminate contemplation which had run to seed, in favour of an active philanthropy which sought the enrichment of the common life. But we have lost immeasurably by the uprooting of this plant of heavenly contemplation. We have built on the erroneous assumption that the contemplation of future glory inevitably unfits us for the service of man.

¶ Were Richard Baxter's labours thinned or impoverished by his contemplation of "the saints' everlasting rest"? When we consider his mental output, his abundant labours as Father-confessor to a countless host, his pains and persecutions and imprisonments, we cannot but think he received some of the powers of his optimistic endurance from contemplations such as he counsels in his incomparable book. "Run familiarly through the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem; visit the patriarchs and prophets, salute the apostles, and admire the armies of martyrs; lead on the heart from street to street, bring it into the palace of

the great King; lead it, as it were, from chamber to chamber. Say to it, 'Hear must I lodge, here must I die, here must I praise, here must I love and be loved. My tears will then be wiped away, my groans be turned to another tune, my cottage of clay be changed to this palace, my prison rags to these splendid robes'; 'for the former things are passed away.'"

Hope, though slow she be, and late,
Yet outruns swift time and fate;
And aforehand loves to be
With remote futurity.

Hope is comfort in distress,
Hope is in misfortune bliss,
Hope in sorrow is delight,
Hope is day in darkest night.

Hope cast upward is to where
Storms do never domineer;
Trust and hope will welcome thee
There to full security.[1]

Our thought of future glory must have several elements in it if it is to nourish our hope as it nourished his.

(1) It must have an *element of personality* in it. It must be a hope which means future fulfilment to me. It must not, like Buddhism, represent the loss of personality—annihilation—as the reward. It must not offer us even the stimulus of the positivists. "You desire hope," they say; "there is hope; we will grant immortality—an immortality of influence. The good you do shall live after you." No. There must be an immortality in the vision and communion of Him whom to serve is eternal life.

(2) It must have an *element of recovery* in it. How we crave the recovery of lost friends! Is it all over when they leave us? The heart refuses to think so. It clings to the thought of reunion. Christ is the pledge of that—Christ the Uniter, who as on earth at the house of Jairus, at the bier of Nain, at the grave of Bethany, is the Joiner of parted hands and sundered lives, delivering divided ones to each other. We crave also the recovery of lost energies. Capacities that are checked by its ungenial conditions, aspirations that are thwarted by its narrow limits,

[1] Francis Beaumont.

expenditures of effort and affection that are made void by its thankless receptions, we think of them all. Has God created them only that they may be thrown away? Shall He not rather have respect to the work of His hands, and perfect that which concerneth us? Our hope is in Christ, who not only pledges their recovery, but promises that they shall be recovered by us, as the ultimate witnesses of His faithfulness, the ultimate sharers of His joy.

(3) It must have an *element of catholicity* in it. Hope, if it is to be true and complete, must embrace in its comprehensive sweep not only good for ourselves, in the attainment of a personal immortality and the re-establishment of personal ties, but good for the whole wide creation. It must include the purifying and the rectifying of society, the evangelizing of the nations, and the transforming of nature itself. No expectation would be perfect which does not blend with its pictures of individual and mutual blessedness the picture of a regenerate world, free from the curse and crowned with the blessing, bathed in the glory of God most precious, the brightness of His perfect purity, the beauty of His finished plan.

> Lo! crowned with unutterable calm
> And robed in light, came up the day-star Hope,
> The virgin mother of the Christ of Joy.
> Clear were her eyes with innocence, and deep
> With dreams. Her lips were full with mysteries.
> A crystal globe she held, wherein were seen
> New vistas unimaginably fair.
> Her presence seemed a kiss of God, which all
> Rose up to take. In the diffusèd light
> Of her adorable simplicity
> Each man threw down his habit of disguise
> And stood before his fellows, candid, brave,
> Yet wearing weakness meekly, as a babe
> Will wear it.[1]

II.

Patient in Tribulation.

St. Paul is his own best commentary on his own counsels. His purposes were frequently broken by tumultuous shocks. His

[1] Anna Bunston, *The Porch of Paradise*, 12.

plans were destroyed by hatred and violence. His course was twisted here, diverted there, and wrenched a hundred times from its appointed goings by the mischievous plots of wicked men. The little churches he had founded were in chronic disturbance and unrest. They were often infested with puerilities, and sometimes they were honeycombed by heresies which consumed their very life. And yet how sound and noble his patience! With what fruitful tenderness he waits for his lagging pupils! His very reproofs are given, not with the blind, clumsy blows of a street mob, but with the quiet, discriminating hand of a surgeon. This man, more than most men, had proved the hygienic value of endurance, and he, more than most men, was competent to counsel his fellow-believers to discipline themselves to patience in tribulation.

I. Tribulation.

What is tribulation? Tribulation is comprehensive enough. It denotes every possible loss, cross, trouble that can enter into the mind of man; whatever we passively suffer, whatever we actively endure.

Let us look at tribulation, then, in some of its different aspects. "Patient in tribulation"? Yes. But make sure first of all that the tribulation is real, not fancied. Did we ever try to estimate the proportion in which the fanciful, the fictitious, the imaginary ills in life stand to the actual? Is it not the case that many a man makes his own sorrows, and that the things we anticipate, but which never happen, have more in them of calamity and burden than what we are forced in Providence to endure? Real tribulation we can divide into two kinds—that which comes to us from others, and that which comes from ourselves.

1. *Tribulation from without.*—This kind of tribulation has both a positive and a negative side. Take the positive first—that is, actual suffering caused us by others. This kind of tribulation was most immediately in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he wrote the words first to the little Roman Church. Dark clouds were gathering, threatenings of coming trouble. Days of persecution were at hand. Nero, hardening himself in vice, would soon need some one upon whom he could charge his guilt,

and wreak his spite; no suffering would be too cruel with which to afflict the Church of God. To-day persecution does not take the same form. It is not so much bodily as mental persecution. The young man of to-day who follows Christ has no fear of death, imprisonment, or injury in any way to his body, but if he be thoroughgoing he is still persecuted—persecuted by jeers and laughter and even by calumny.

¶ One of our bishops, when he was a London incumbent, was at one time deeply distressed by the persistent calumnies of a certain obnoxious parishioner. He wrote for advice to a high legal luminary, who was also a very religious man. His answer was laconic; it was a quotation: "'Jesus stood before the governor. . . . And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing, . . . insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.' Dear So-and-so, let the governor marvel greatly."[1]

There is a kind of negative tribulation which also comes from without. It is the disappointment that others cause us—the things we have to do without. Some glowing purpose has been suddenly frustrated; some bit of found work has been rudely broken. We suffer profound disappointment. And disappointment is apt to kindle irritation, and when that fire begins to burn much valuable furniture is in danger of being consumed.

¶ One of the greatest crises in Principal Rainy's life was when the House of Lords delivered judgment against the United Free Church. Rainy had given the strength of his life to promoting the union between his own Church and the United Presbyterian Church, and now it seemed as though he had only brought his own Church into grave trouble. He was in the House of Lords when judgment was given. After the decision he took Mr. Haldane's arm and passed out with him. He was his guest in London. Mr. Haldane says that on the way home he never spoke. When they reached home he sat down and without any bitterness or resentment spoke, and "the one expression of regret that fell from his lips was that he was old."

Loitering progress is tribulation of an allied kind. Things are walking, and we want them to run; or they are running, and we want them to fly. We hear one and another say: "Things don't go fast enough for me"; or "Things are too slow for me." And

[1] Basil Wilberforce.

we become irritated, and then irritable, and we lose our patience, and in losing our patience we lose the very spirit and instrument of progress. How true this is in our relationship to little children, and especially to little children who are not highly gifted, and who have the misfortune to be dull-witted and slow. How fatal is the mistake to become impatient with them. To become impatient is to deprive them of the very atmosphere they require for journeying at all; impatience never converts dull-wittedness into quick-wittedness, and the teacher or parent who becomes impatient is robbing the child of its heritage, increasing its load of disadvantage, and making its little pilgrim journey prematurely dark and hard.

O comrade bold, of toil and pain!
  Thy trial how severe,
When sever'd first by prisoner's chain
  From thy loved labour-sphere!

Say, did impatience first impel
  The heaven-sent bond to break?
Or, couldst thou bear its hindrance well,
  Loitering for Jesu's sake?

O might we know! for sore we feel
  The languor of delay,
When sickness lets our fainter zeal,
  Or foes block up our way.

Lord! who Thy thousand years dost wait
  To work the thousandth part
Of Thy vast plan, for us create
  With zeal a patient heart.[1]

2. *Tribulation from within.*—Quite as much of our tribulation is internal; it is not occasioned by others. Such trouble may be physical, as St. Paul's own "thorn in the flesh." Or it may be mental and spiritual. There is no one who does any thinking at all but has entered the dark, cold, chilling circle of apparently insoluble mystery. It may be the burdensome presence of immediate and palpable realities, such as the presence of suffering and pain. Or it may be those problems lying upon the borderland, or well within that mysterious realm where we seem to have

[1] J. H. Newman.

neither eyes nor ears, hands nor feet: the mystery of God, the mystery of Providence, the mystery of Jesus Christ — His incarnation, His resurrection, His glorification, His relation to sin and hope and human endeavour and the veiled to-morrow; and all the great pressing problems of human birth, and human life, and human destiny. What shall we do with them? Or, what shall we not do with them? Let us make it an essential in all our assumptions that a prerequisite to all discovery is patience in tribulation. Do not let us deal with them as though they were Christmas puzzles, to be taken up at odd moments and cursorily examined, and then thrown aside again in irritation and impetuous haste.

¶ Dr. Jowett says, "I am amazed to observe how hastily men and women drop these things; they 'cannot be bothered with them,' and so they retreat into a perilous indifference or into a fruitless agnosticism. George Eliot dropped her vital faith in the course of eleven days. Robert Elsmere dropped his vital faith with almost equal celerity. I heard from one young fellow who was burning all his boats and refusing to sail these vast, mysterious, glorious seas, and all because he had read a little pamphlet of not more than fifty pages from cover to cover!"

O why are darkness and thick cloud
  Wrapped close for ever round the throne of God?
  Why is our pathway still in mystery trod?
None answers, though we call aloud.

  The seedlet of the rose,
    While still beneath the ground,
  Think you it ever knows
    The mystery profound
Of its own power of birth and bloom,
Until it springs above its tomb?

  The caterpillar crawls
    Its mean life in the dust,
  Or hangs upon the walls
    A dead aurelian crust;
Think you the larva ever knew
Its gold-winged flight before it flew?

  When from the port of Spain
    Columbus sailed away,

And down the sinking main
Moved towards the setting day,
Could any words have made him see
The new worlds that were yet to be?

The boy with laugh and play
Fills out his little plan,
Still lisping, day by day,
Of how he'll be a man;
But can you to his childish brain
Make aught of coming manhood plain?

Let heaven be just above us,
Let God be e'er so nigh,
Yet howsoe'er He love us,
And howe'er much we cry,
There is no speech that can make clear
The thing "that doth not yet appear."

'Tis not that God loves mystery.
The things beyond us we can never know,
Until up to their lofty height we grow,
And finite grasps infinity.[1]

ii. Patience.

That which passes muster for the spirit of patience is sometimes only constitutional amiability, or lymphatic indifference and stagnation.

1. Let us look first, then, at this spirit—the spirit of *indolence*. Perhaps its most frequent cause is a want of sensitiveness. The person is not finely developed, and so does not feel the tribulation, unless it is very material indeed—or at least does not feel it to anything like the same extent as his more sensitive brother. To the superficial onlooker he seems to be bearing his trial with patience; but he makes no progress, his capacity for sympathy is still dormant. Or his apparent patience may be the result of mere idleness.

¶ Browning in *The Statue and the Bust* teaches the paltriness of this kind of patience. From mere indolence the "Bride of the Riccardi" did not leave her husband and flee to the "Great Duke Ferdinand" whom she loved. It was no thought that she would

[1] Minot Hudson Savage.

be committing a sin that deterred her, and so her patience was worthless. She says:—

> If I spend the night with that devil twice,
> May his window serve as my loop of hell
> Whence a damned soul looks on Paradise!
>
> I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
> Sit at his side and laugh at sorrow
> Ere I count another ave-bell.
>
> 'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
> And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,
> And I save my soul—but not to-morrow.

And he on his part argues:—

> Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool—
> For to-night the Envoy arrives from France,
> Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.
>
> Be sure that each renewed the vow,
> No morrow's sun should arise and set
> And leave them then as it left them now.
>
> But next day passed, and next day yet,
> With still fresh cause to wait one day more
> Ere each leaped over the parapet.
>
> I hear you reproach, "But delay was best
> For their end was a crime"—Oh, a crime will do
> As well, I reply, to serve for a test,
>
> As a virtue golden through and through,
> Sufficient to vindicate itself
> And prove its worth at a moment's view!
>
> The counter our lovers staked was lost
> As surely as if it were lawful coin:
> And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
>
> Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
> Though the end in sight was a vice, I say
> You of the virtue, (we issue join)
> How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

2. But there is a finer spirit—the spirit of *stoicism*—which animates some. It also, however, is a spirit of stagnation. It is no more than a surrender to the inevitable.

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever Gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.
>
> In the fell clutch of circumstance
> I have not winced nor cried aloud,
> Under the bludgeonings of chance,
> My head is bloody but unbowed.
>
> It matters not how strait the gate,
> How charged with punishments the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul.[1]

3. The spirit of *progress*. Wherein, then, lies the difference between the Christian spirit of progress and this old pagan spirit of stoicism?

(1) Take the two attitudes towards death. Seneca, like a Stoic, argues thus: "Death is universal, all men have died; death is inevitable, we must die. It is no good for any man to complain about the inevitable and the universal. It is better for us simply to submit to what we cannot alter." Now here stands St. Paul, face to face with death. It is not a pleasant death, any more than it was a pleasant life. But St. Paul says, To me to die is gain. I have a wish to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. If the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a house, builded of God, eternal in the heavens.

¶ Such was the patience of Lazarus after his resurrection when "his heart and brain moved there" in glory, and "his feet stay here."

> "How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
> Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
> To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
> Thy tribe, thy crazy tale and thee at once?"

[1] W. E. Henley.

He merely looked with his large eyes on me.
The man is apathetic, you deduce?
Contrariwise he loves both old and young,
Able and weak—affects the very brutes
And birds—how say I? flowers of the field—
As a wise workman recognizes tools
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb:
Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin—
An indignation which is promptly curbed.[1]

(2) Now if we have this spirit of patience in tribulation our pilgrim journey will be furthered; for to Christian patience there are two sides, a passive but also an active. We usually think of patience as a passive virtue, resignation, calm waiting for something to happen, as in Shakespeare's classic lines:

She sat like patience on a monument
Smiling at grief.

But the word has an active side, even in our common speech, as in the phrase "a patient investigator," implying untiring industry. It carries with it the idea of fortitude and high courage, willing to suffer, to endure, working out great ends undiscouraged, without repining or fretfulness.

¶ The rock upon which the water drops, abides amidst the flux of the tides of the water, and is firm; but the camel, patient, moving across the thirsty desert, scenting by its wondrous instinct the oasis, or the city that is afar, is patient—endures.

(3) And, lastly, let us note that there are stages in Christian patience. We must begin with the true perspective and the feeling towards God of children to a Father, but after that we must sedulously cultivate the grace, advancing from step to step. Trustful acceptance of the will of God as the best possible for us —how difficult it is. But there are those who have risen to a still greater height and who not only accept the tribulation with patience, but feel actual joy in it.

¶ Dr. Griffith John has told us that one day, when he was surrounded by a hostile Chinese crowd, and violence was used, he put up his hand to his smitten face, and when he withdrew it,

[1] Browning, *Epistle of Karshish.*

and saw it bathed in blood, he was possessed by an extraordinary sense of exaltation, and he rejoiced that he had been "counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." David Hill records a similar experience of unspeakable ecstasy, when his hand hung limp from a brutal blow. But, indeed, the witnesses are multitudinous; they can be found in every corner of the great fields of service, suffering men and women, wearing their scars like medals, feeling as though there had been conferred upon them some heavenly title and degree, and stepping out in the assured companionship of the once crucified but risen Lord.

III.

Continuing Stedfastly in Prayer.

The essence of prayer consists in drawing nigh; in other words, holding communion. The simplest and best test of a good prayer is: Did we draw nigh? Did we enter God's Presence? Were we conscious that God was very nigh? Many times we have said our prayers but have never prayed; and this because our hearts were far from God. At other times, perhaps, we said no words but we entered the Presence with longing hearts. We looked, we thirsted, we wanted, and so we very truly prayed.

Prayer is intercourse; it is praise; it is congratulation; it is adoration of the Infinite Majesty; it is a colloquy in which the soul engages with the All-wise and the All-holy; it is a basking in the sunshine, varied by ejaculations of thankfulness to the Sun of Righteousness for His light and His warmth. In this larger sense, the earlier part of the "Te Deum" is prayer as much as the latter part; the earliest and latest clauses of the "Gloria in Excelsis" as truly as the central ones; the "Sanctus" or the "Jubilate" no less than the Litany; the "Magnificat" as certainly as the fifty-first Psalm.

St. Paul is addressing Christians, and so he does not simply say "pray." He takes it for granted that they pray. But what he fears in them is a relaxing of their efforts, a losing of their first zeal in prayer, and so his exhortation is "Continue stedfastly in prayer." Do not let the strength of your prayerful spirit escape, and do not let your acts of prayer, your special seasons diminish or grow less strenuous. It is an exhortation to hold fast.

Let us look at the prayerful spirit, and then at occasions of prayer. It is almost impossible to separate them, for they act and react the one on the other.

1. *The prayerful spirit.*—We cannot fulfil the Apostle's exhortation even if we keep our regular seasons of prayer unless we have the prayerful spirit, the spirit of harmony with the will of God. It is the aspiration after all good, the wish, stronger than any earthly passion or desire, to live in His service only. It is the temper of mind which says in the evening, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"; which rises up in the morning, "to do thy will, O God"; and which all the day regards the actions of business and of daily life as done unto the Lord and not to men—"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The trivial employments, the meanest or lowest occupations may receive a kind of dignity when thus converted into the service of God. This is the life of prayer, or rather the life which is itself prayer, which is always raised above this world, and yet is always on a level with this world; the life which has lost the sense of consciousness of self, and is devoted to God and to mankind, which may almost be said to think the thoughts of God, as well as do His works.

2. *Acts of prayer.*—But the prayerful spirit cannot exist unless special acts of prayer are practised. A passive desire to live in the atmosphere of prayer is dangerous, unless it finds its proper activity in definite exercises of prayer. We shall succeed in maintaining the spirit of constant prayer only when we foster it by stated periods of devotion.

¶ If a man is right, and puts the practice of praying in its right place, then his serving and giving and speaking will be fairly fragrant with the presence of God. The great people of the earth to-day are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. This something else is important. Very important, and pressing, but less important and less pressing than prayer.[1]

[1] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, 12.

3. Such continuance will not be without its effects. Its effects will be twofold.

(1) *The effect on the man who prays.*—No one denies that prayer has a subjective effect. It has an *intellectual* effect. Thus it has been observed that persons without natural ability have, through the earnestness of their devotional habits, acquired in time powers of sustained thought, and an accuracy and delicacy of intellectual touch, which would not otherwise have belonged to them. The intellect being the instrument by which the soul handles religious truth, a real interest in religious truth will of itself often furnish an educational discipline; it alone educates an intellect which would otherwise be uneducated.

It has also a *moral* effect. Habitual prayer constantly confers decision on the wavering, and energy on the listless, and calmness on the excitable, and disinterestedness on the selfish. It braces the moral nature by transporting it into a clear, invigorating, unearthly atmosphere; it builds up the moral life, insensibly but surely remedying its deficiencies, and strengthening its weak points, till there emerges a comparatively symmetrical and consistent whole, the excellence of which all must admit, though its secret is known only to those who know it by experience.

It has a *social* effect. Prayer makes men, as members of society, different in their whole bearing from those who do not pray. It gilds social intercourse and conduct with a tenderness, an unobtrusiveness, a sincerity, a frankness, an evenness of temper, a cheerfulness, a collectedness, a constant consideration for others, united to a simple loyalty to truth and duty, which leavens and strengthens society.

It is not too much to say that prayer has even *physical* results. The countenance of a Fra Angelico reflects his spirit no less than does his art; the bright eye, the pure elevated expression speak for themselves It was said of Keble that in his later years his face was like that of an illuminated clock; the colour and gilding had long faded away from the hands and figures, but the ravages of time were more than compensated for by the light which shone from within.

(2) *The effect on those prayed for.*—The subjective effect of prayer does not cover the whole ground. Prayer has also an objective effect. A man may say, "I can quite understand the

good of praying for oneself; I can quite see that, according to God's will, these gifts of grace are to be worked for by prayer, like the gifts of God in nature; but where is the evidence that there is the slightest good in praying for others?" He might even take this line—he might say, "It is presumptuous for me to imagine that I can affect the destiny of another soul! It is against what I read of the struggle for existence by each individual in nature. It is unfair, for what is to happen to those for whom no one prays? And where is the evidence that intercession for others does any good at all?"

¶ Gilmour of Mongolia said: "Unprayed for, I feel like a diver at the bottom of a river, with no air to breathe; or like a fireman with an empty hose in a blazing building."

¶ For nearly twenty years it was the daily practice of Cardinal Vaughan's mother to spend an hour—from five to six in the afternoon—in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament asking this favour—that God would call every one of her children to serve Him in the Choir or in the Sanctuary. In the event all her five daughters entered convents, and of her eight sons six became priests; even the two who have remained in the world for a time entered ecclesiastical seminaries to try their vocations.[1]

4. *The encouragement.*—Be sure that no true prayer remains unanswered, though thousands of prayers remain ungranted. He who alone knows all the things we have need of sees fit again and again to refuse the thing we ask, or to deny even the most unselfish of requests, and to delay satisfaction of the purest desires on behalf of those whose sins or sorrows we have carried to His Throne of Grace. And yet, assuredly, all such prayer enters into His ears, and all such prayer is duly answered, if not granted, by Him. Do we not sometimes discover, it may be long after, how, in ways we little dreamt of, through channels of which we knew nothing, the blessing for which we pleaded in vain was vouchsafed at last? And when there is no such discovery, where the refusal of the good we asked seems absolutely decreed and final, is it not our wisdom to leave all in the Father's hands, and believe that what we know not now we shall know hereafter? No disclosure which awaits us behind the veil could surpass in interest the revelation of what has

[1] J. G. Snead-Cox, *Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, i. 11.

been achieved for ourselves and others by genuine yet ungranted prayer.

Two brothers freely cast their lot
With David's royal Son;
The cost of conquest counting not,
They deem the battle won.

Brothers in heart, they hope to gain
An undivided joy;
That man may one with man remain,
As boy was one with boy.

Christ heard; and will'd that James should fall,
First prey of Satan's rage,
John linger out his fellows all,
And die in bloodless age.

Now they join hands once more above,
Before the Conqueror's throne;
Thus God grants prayer, but in His love
Makes times and ways His own.[1]

[1] J. H. Newman.

The Polemics of Christianity.

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The Polemics of Christianity.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.—Rom. xii. 21.

This description of Christian warfare, of what may be called the Apostle's rule of "polemics" or "doing battle," is well worthy of its place at the close of his great summary of Christian duties. "Be not overcome of evil"—"be not conquered by evil" (so we might more faithfully render it)—"be not conquered by evil, but conquer evil by good." The Apostle here, as so often elsewhere, has before his mind the image of the Christian soldier. Nothing shows more completely how in his time, peaceful as it was, the military character of the Roman Empire filled the whole horizon of the ordinary thoughts and topics of men than the Apostle's constant allusions to the armour—the sword, the shield, the helmet—the battle, the conquest, the triumph. They show this, and they show that he did not shrink from using these images, even for the most peaceful, for the most solemn, for the most sacred purposes; they show that he was not in his Epistles a different man from what he was in common life; that the sights and sounds which filled his eyes and ears in the world around him were not forgotten when he took the parchment scroll, and bade his companion write down at his dictation the words which were to comfort and strengthen, not the Roman Christians of his own time only, but the whole Church of God for ever.

We shall deal with the subject in two parts. Let us take them in the order of the text.

I. The Power of Evil.
II. The Power of Good.

I.

The Power of Evil.

i. What is Evil?

1. We should observe in the first place the immediate object of St. Paul's prohibition. What is the particular form of evil against which he directs this warning? It is the evil of giving way to a spirit of revenge. This prohibition does not mean that no power of correction is committed to man. In the opening verses of the very next chapter we are told that an earthly ruler is "the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Distinguish between administration of punishment for offences against the law of God or man and infliction of chastisement through personal anger or some personal offence. The Son of Man, who never avenged Himself, by word or deed, upon those who injured or insulted Him, yet, on occasion, took upon Himself the office of avenger, visiting with His severest condemnation the profaners of His Father's Temple, and upbraiding with the bitterest censure the hypocrisy and essential worldliness of the religious leaders of His day. As is the Master, such must the servants be. Let us reserve our indignation (a gift of God) for the condemnation of sin. Let us bear with meekness whatever slights or insults are aimed at ourselves.

¶ Christianity is reproached because it has brought little that is new into the sphere of morals. That is quite a gratuitous impeachment. Our Lord's method of dealing with evil, for instance, is startlingly new. Before He came the world knew no other way of treating evil than by reprisal and retribution; pains and penalties were the only remedies known to the rulers and judges of the earth. The Incarnation disclosed to the world a new and an amazing thought: for the mailed fist it substituted the pierced hand. Henceforth error and unrighteousness were to be antagonized by knowledge, long-suffering, sympathy, and forgiveness. On these lines our Lord taught, and thus personally He dealt with the provocations of His contemporaries. His disciples drank in His spirit, imitated His example, and taught His doctrine. The contrast between the truculent systems of the ancient world and the mild programme of the Gospel is complete. "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but

whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The originality of this ethic is incomparable.[1]

2. But there is an extended application to the words of the text. The inspired maxim includes all forms of evil, and there is no form of evil by which we are to allow ourselves to be overcome. What, then, is evil? How can we define it? Evil, like good, is one of those very wide and comprehensive words which, when we want to put our ideas into shape and order, urgently require definition, and which, nevertheless, by reason of their very width and comprehensiveness, almost refuse to be defined. But let us go to the root of the matter. What is evil in its root? Simply this. It is unregulated desire. Desire is that quality in men which corresponds to gravitation in the physical bodies, which, while all is well with us, keeps us moving around our true centre, the Being of beings—God. Sin is the free concentration of desire upon some other centre than God, that is, upon some created being; and just as if, in the heavenly spheres, a planet could get detached from its true orbit—from loyal revolutions around its proper sun—and could thus come within the range of other and counteracting attractions, the effect would be vast and irretrievable disaster, so is it in the moral world. Sin is this disorder in the governing desires of the soul, followed by a corresponding disorder in its outward action.

3. Evil is the work not of God but of the creature. God could not directly have created evil without denying Himself. Evil is a result of the abuse of God's highest gift to created beings —their free will. Evil is the creature repudiating the law of its being by turning away its desire from Him who is the source, the centre, the end of its existence. If it be urged that God, in making man free, must have foreseen that man would thus abuse his freedom, it must be replied that God's horizons are wider than ours, and that we may not unreasonably believe that He foresaw, in the very cure of evil, a good which would more than compensate for its existence—that, as the Apostle puts it, if sin abounded grace would much more abound.

¶ Every one knows that microbes are a cause of disease. It is a great wonder, seeing that there are so many microbes about,

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

that we keep as well as we do. But the reason why we keep well has been explained. In Pasteur's laboratory in Paris a Russian physiologist named Metschnikoff has found out the secret, and he tells us how it is they are not so deadly as otherwise they might be. He has proved that certain cells contained in the blood, now called phagocytes, commonly known as the white corpuscles of the blood, have the power of independent motion. That is to say, they not only travel with the blood as it flows through the arteries and veins, but they can go anywhere in the body if they so choose. These phagocytes wander about in the blood, even make their way inside the tissue, and, wonderful to relate, they pursue, devour, and digest these deadly disease-producing microbes. They are like guardian angels of the body. Now there is something very similar going on in our spiritual life. St. Paul said: "When I would do good, evil is present with me." We have all felt like that, and we all have the same war going on in our inmost being. When we disobey God, we always know what we ought to do—there is the good voice struggling to warn and crush the bad tendency. Conscience is a fine phagocyte. Listen to it always, and the deadly microbe of wrong-doing will soon be overtaken and slain. Your soul's life will thus become healthy, strong, and noble.[1]

ii. The warning.

"Be not overcome of evil." Those words contain at once a warning of danger and an encouragement to resistance. They assume, as all Scripture does, that there is such a thing as evil, that it is around us, that contact with it is inevitable, that defeat and ruin by it are not impossible. It would be a shallow and a false philosophy, it would be a treacherous and apostate religion which should attempt to conceal this from us, or to tell us that the hard, narrow, up-hill path to heaven is smooth, and easy and strewn with roses. To our first parents the school of evil was Paradise itself. Esau was bred in the noble simplicity of the patriarch's tent; the sons of Eli within the curtains of God's bright sanctuary; Manasses in the pure palace of a royal saint; Judas among the chosen ones of the heavenly Kingdom, and in daily intercourse with the Son of God Himself. Yet what became of them? Esau grew into a coarse, sensual hunter; the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; Manasses was a foul apostate; and for Judas, the thief, the traitor, the son of perdition, it were

[1] J. Learmount.

better that he had not been born. So it is God's will that man should be liable everywhere to the possibilities of evil. But—"*resist* the devil, and he will flee from you."

1. Now, with regard to the particular case in point, St. Paul meant that we are overcome by evil whenever we yield to revenge, or become indifferent to the good and the welfare of those who do us wrong. If we say (or even think), "It's no concern of mine. Let him reap as he has sown, let him look after himself, for to his own master he stands or falls," we forget that, in a real sense, we are all our brothers' keepers; not the keepers of their consciences—and we may not presume to dictate to them what they should believe, or what they should do—but we are their keepers in the sense that we are bound to help them, and "as we have opportunity," to "work that which is good" toward them; and above all things to aid them in the conquest of their faults, whatever they may do to us.

¶ What is it to be overcome of evil? Generally speaking it is just to suffer evil to lead us into evil. Evil for evil, we say; that is, revenge wrong by wrong. We have an example of this in the history of Tamerlane the Great, king of the Tartars, who reigned over the greater part of Western Asia some six hundred years ago. In the battle of Angora, which was fought in the year 1402, he defeated and took captive Bajazet, the king of the Turks. At first he treated the fallen monarch with great consideration and showed him much kindness. One day, however, entering into conversation with him, he asked, "Now, king, tell me freely and truly what thou wouldst have done to me had I fallen into thy power." Bajazet, who had a most fierce and implacable disposition, answered, "Had God given unto me the victory I would have enclosed thee in an iron cage and carried thee about with me as a spectacle of derision to the world." Then Tamerlane, in a flame of passion, said, "Thou proud man, as thou wouldst have done with me, even so shall I do with thee." And he was as good—or should I say as *bad*?—as his word. A strong iron cage was made, and Bajazet was for three years carried about in the train of his conqueror, until at last, hearing that he was to be borne into Tartary, he struck his head violently against the iron bars and so put an end to his miserable existence. Now we see in this story how the conqueror became the conquered; the victor was changed into the vanquished. For Tamerlane was overcome of evil. His character would have appeared much nobler had he said to Bajazet, "I will treat thee much better than thou wouldst

treat me: thou wouldst expose me to shame, but I will advance thee to honour."[1]

2. There are, however, other evils to which this maxim applies. We are not to be overcome of evil as we see it in society, in the tendencies at work around us; neither are we to be overcome by it as it exists within ourselves, in the habits we may have formed. Are we not all at times the victims of these? It may be the outbreak of a fiery temper, or the querulousness of a discontented soul, the suspiciousness of an uncharitable heart, the jealousy of a selfish spirit, the rashness of ungenerous judgment, or the sordidness of a worldly nature.

3. Now who of us will not admit that he has at some time or other been overcome by such things? Yes, this is part of the warfare. We may have been "overcome," but we are never to be beaten by them, or to despair of the conquest of such faults. St. Paul says nothing about the length of the contest, but in the ultimate issue we must be the victors, not the vanquished. Sin gets into our lives, and it is a blessed thing for us that, even after sin has conquered us, it is possible for us by God's mercy to conquer it in the end. We may lose a battle but need not lose the war, for we can repent. What is repentance? Being sorry for sin? No, not exactly. It means thinking again. "Second thoughts are best," says the proverb. And repentance means "second thoughts." Whenever we sin we think foolishly and wickedly; we deceive ourselves. When we repent we think better of it; we think wisely and rightly. And when by a foolish, wicked thought we allow sin to conquer us, we still can by means of repentance—the second wise thoughts that God always gives to those who will take them—drive out sin again.

¶ Some time ago a little girl went into a room where a table was laid for dinner. Among other things there was a plate of oranges. The little girl felt tempted to take one of these, and she let herself be conquered by the wicked thought. She walked up to the table and took one, and then, not knowing that she was being watched all the time, went out of the room. But in a few minutes the one who was watching saw her come back. She walked quickly to the table and put the orange she had stolen back in its place, saying as she did so "Sold again, Satan!"[2]

[1] J. Aitchison. [2] J. M. Gibbon.

II.

The Power of Good.

"Overcome evil with good"—is this possible and practicable? Certainly. And no other method of overcoming evil is either possible or practicable. We may suppress it by force, but it remains evil still; it is not overcome. We may deprive it of its power of action, but it still exists; it is not overcome. We may frighten or flatter it into submission, but we do not thereby conquer it. We may shut our eyes to its presence, and imagine that it has ceased to be, but for all that it is powerful still, as we may soon find to our cost. Evil is overcome only when he who has been overcome by it renounces it and allies himself with good.

i. Good must win.

1. God is the perfect goodness, and every good influence comes from God, therefore, however great the force of evil, good is always stronger than evil. But this is not all. The idea of God as the embodiment of abstract goodness will not materially help us in the battle of life. Sin is evil, and we feel its presence; and we need more than a mere ideal of abstract goodness to overcome the evil. But God has not left us thus blindly to feel after the good. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." We shall be able to lay hold of the power of goodness by recognizing that the peculiar self-utterance of God is Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of a universal sonship, and therefore that the overcoming principle is in us and in all men, and, being Divine, is ultimately irresistible.

2. It is not enough to rely on the good within ourselves; we must look to the good without ourselves. What that highest good is, we all know. But do we sufficiently remember how in the thought of that highest good, in the communion with God in Christ, lies not only our peace and safety, but our victory over evil? In earthly warfare, we know well that, however courageous may be the host, they must have a leader in whom to trust. And so it is in our spiritual warfare; we must have the example and the encouragement of the just and good who have gone before us. But, above all, we must look to Him who is called "Jesus"—that

is, our "Joshua," our Conqueror, our victorious Leader, the Captain of our salvation, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

¶ It is told of the Emperor Constantine, that he, the founder of the first Christian Empire, the first of Christian sovereigns, was converted to the faith of Christ by a vision which appeared to him at the head of his armies—a vision of a flaming cross, in the centre of which was written, in almost the very same Greek words as the Apostle here uses: "In this conquer," or "*By this conquer.*" The story itself is encompassed with doubt, but in a figure it conveys to us a true lesson. "In this conquer" should still be our motto. "In this," in the Cross of Christ, the highest "good" which God has revealed to man, "in this conquer." Conquer, because the Cross of Christ shows us what is God's love to His creatures. Conquer, because it shows us what is the highest call of man. Conquer, because it shows us the strength and the firmness, the gentleness and mercy, the suffering and the victory in which, and through which, we too are to be victorious.[1]

Rise, O my soul, with thy desires to heaven,
And with divinest contemplation use
Thy time where time's eternity is given,
And let vain thoughts no more thy thoughts abuse;
But down in darkness let them lie:
So live thy better, let thy worse thoughts die!

And thou, my soul, inspired with holy flame,
View and review with most regardful eye
That holy cross, whence thy salvation came,
On which thy Saviour and thy sin did die!
For in that sacred object is much pleasure,
And in that Saviour is my life, my treasure.

To thee, O Jesu! I direct mine eyes,
To thee my hands, to thee my humble knees;
To thee my heart shall offer sacrifice,
To thee my thoughts, who my thoughts only sees.
To thee my self, my self and all I give;
To thee I die, to thee I only live![2]

3. The greatest force in the world is good influence. It is encouraging to the weak and erring to know that they may overcome their weaknesses, that there is a power which may be instilled into their lives, giving them strength to resist all the

[1] A. P. Stanley. [2] Sir Walter Raleigh.

overtures of the Evil One, and to battle against all his assaults. To all those who will let good influence be their guardian angel victory is secured. Right always wins—first, last, and always right is victorious.

¶ Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasseled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in thin vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.[1]

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the true wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach.
The overflow of heart it needs
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.[2]

ii. How Good overcomes Evil.

We may divide the evil which we have to combat into three classes. (1) There is *personal evil*, that is evil in ourselves. (2) Then there is the evil of which the text particularly speaks, evil in our neighbour—we might call it *domestic evil*. (3) And, lastly, there is the evil in the world at large. We may characterize it as *public evil*. All these forms of evil are to be overcome with good.

1. *Personal evil.*—How shall I overcome evil in myself? I shall overcome it by emphasizing, predicting, calling into operation

[1] George Eliot, *Janet's Repentance*. [2] Horatius Bonar.

the good. I will overcome the natural with the spiritual, the temporal with the eternal, the phenomenal with the real; where I find an evil tendency in myself I will instantly call upon the opposite tendency in the Christ nature within me and accentuate it.

(1) Now all personal evil begins in thought, therefore evil thoughts will be overcome by good thoughts. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." "*These* things"—is this our way? Is it not rather our unhappy habit to revolve in our thought and imagination whatsoever things are painful, humiliating, ugly, and discouraging? We shall never overcome evil by this fellowship with sin and sadness. We overcome the evil in the good. The cardinal matter is to fix our thoughts and affections on things above, not on things on the earth; we cannot even think of these things without being blessed. The thought of beauty leaves a stain of sweet colour on the soul; to think of greatness is to grow; to muse on purity is to suffer a sea change into the whiteness and preciousness of the pearl.

¶ That useless thoughts spoil all; that the mischief began there; but that we ought to be diligent to reject them as soon as we perceived their impertinence to the matter in hand, or to our salvation; and return to our communion with God.[1]

¶ You remember that terrible touch in one of our Lord's sternest parables, about the evil spirit returning to the house whence he came out, and finding it "empty, swept, and garnished" —then goeth he and taketh to himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. What does that "empty, swept, and garnished" mean? It means that if the heart is not pre-occupied with good, it will be invaded by evil. The labourer who stands idle in the market-place is ever ready to be hired in the devil's service. The worm of sin gnaws deepest into the idle heart. But preoccupy your heart with good; pre-occupy your time with honest industry, and you are safe.[2]

[1] Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, 13.
[2] F. W. Farrar.

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep.
She feeds them on the fragrant height
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.[1]

(2) Let us concentrate our efforts on the good. We overcome the evil in the good. We shall not overcome our personal defects by dwelling upon them, tormenting ourselves on account of them, dealing directly with them, or by attempting singly to uproot them. To overcome this or that failing, we must think of it as little as possible, and as much as we can about the corresponding virtue; weaken the bad side by strengthening the good. Let us frankly recognize whatever grace has done for us, and by fostering it drive out the evil. Cherish the good thought, forward the generous impulse, follow out the upward-seeking desire; starve the roots of bitterness, smother them, choke them, drive them out by flowers of grace, fruits of light, and plants of God's right-hand planting.

¶ Mr. Kay Robinson, the naturalist, describes a competition witnessed by him in the fields. Owing to a peculiarity of weather, the poppies had managed to get a start of an inch or so in the matter of height over the wheat and barley, and the obnoxious flowers were just beginning to burst into bloom that would have converted the stunted grain into lakes of scarlet, when down came the rain; in a single day and night the wheat shot up above the poppies, and for the rest of the season the poisonous

[1] Alice Meynell.

things were overwhelmed in a wavy sea of prosperous green and yellow gold. A similar competition is going on between our good and our bad qualities; it is a rivalry between the wheat and the tares as to which shall get on top and smother the other. What is the true course to adopt whilst this struggle proceeds? It is to concentrate ourselves on the corn.[1]

2. In dealing with *domestic evil*—that which we see and deplore in our immediate neighbourhood—the text must furnish guidance. The faults and follies of husband, wife, children, companions, servants, neighbours occasion frequent and sincere distress. How are these lapses to be effectually combated? Not by good advice even, much less by scorn and contempt. Verbal censure and social penalty do not largely avail against the evils which trouble our environment; the effectual remedy is unspeakably more costly. Our guilty neighbours must see in us the virtues they lack. Embodied excellence is to do the whole work of rebuking and charming, dispensing with eloquence, whether sacred or profane.

¶ On the walls of a chamber of great beauty in the Alhambra this sentence is inscribed: "Look attentively at my elegance, and thou wilt reap the advantage of a commentary on decoration." The variety, loveliness, and harmony of the architecture of that chamber are themselves a commentary on decoration and render literary criticism and description superfluous. In like manner the fine character and blameless doing of the Christian are a commentary on nobleness, rendering argument and expostulation unnecessary. Offending neighbours see "how awful goodness is, and virtue in her shape how lovely," and words can add nothing to this incarnation of the true and beautiful.[1]

¶ On his first entry upon the field of responsible life, he had formed a serious and solemn engagement with a friend—I suppose it was Hope-Scott—that each would devote himself to active service in some branch of religious work. He could not, without treason to his gifts, go forth like Selwyn or Patteson to Melanesia to convert the savages. He sought a missionary-field at home, and he found it among the unfortunate ministers to "the great sin of great cities." In these humane efforts at reclamation he persevered all through his life, fearless of misconstruction, fearless of the levity or baseness of men's tongues, regardless almost of the possible mischiefs to the public policies that depended on him.

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

Greville tells the story how in 1853 a man made an attempt one night to extort money from Mr. Gladstone, then in office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, by threats of exposure; and how he instantly gave the offender into custody, and met the case at the police office. Greville could not complete the story. The man was committed for trial. Mr. Gladstone directed his solicitors to see the accused was properly defended. He was convicted and sent to prison. By and by Mr. Gladstone inquired from the governor of the prison how the delinquent was conducting himself. The report being satisfactory, he next wrote to Lord Palmerston, then at the Home Office, asking that the prisoner should be let out. There was no worldly wisdom in it, we all know. But then, what are people Christians for?[1]

¶ Nothing more entices charity than to be first in the exercise of it. Dost thou desire to be loved? Love then.[2]

¶ I have read a story of a certain Chinese Emperor, that he was informed that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of his distant provinces. On hearing this he said to his officers, "Come, follow me, and we will quickly destroy them." He marched forward, and the rebels submitted upon his approach. All now thought that he would take his revenge, but were surprised to see the captives treated with mildness and humanity. "How," cried the first minister, "is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed; and, behold! you have pardoned them all, and even caressed some of them." "I promised," replied the Emperor, "to destroy my enemies. I have fulfilled my word; for see, they are enemies no longer; I have made friends of them."[3]

¶ There is a power for victory in the simple might of goodness. It was with this power that Dr. Arnold overcame lying at Rugby. "It is no use," they said, "telling a lie to the Doctor, he always believes you."

¶ Old books tell us of a place in Arabia where roses grow so thickly that when the wind blows over them it gets so full of the sweet smells as to kill the lions in the desert beyond. Of course that is not true as a fact. There is no such place in Arabia. But it is true as a parable. You *can* kill lions with roses.[4]

¶ Be good at the depths of you, and you will discover that those who surround you will be good even to the same depths.

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 419.
[2] Augustine, *De Catech. Rud.*
[3] F. H. Robarts.
[4] J. M. Gibbon.

Nothing responds more infallibly to the secret cry of goodness than the secret cry of goodness that is near. While you are actively good in the invisible, all those who approach you will unconsciously do things that they could not do by the side of any other man. Therein lies a force that has no name; a spiritual rivalry that knows no resistance. It is as though this were the actual place where is the sensitive spot of our soul; for there are souls that seem to have forgotten their existence, and to have renounced everything that enables them to rise; but, once touched here, they all draw themselves erect; and in the Divine plains of the secret goodness the most humble souls cannot endure defeat.[1]

3. The effectual way to subdue *public evil* is the strategy of the text.

(1) We do not really overcome evil by *substituting one evil for another*, or by setting one evil to drive out another. Scientists neutralize one kind of microbe by introducing another, and sometimes, it would seem, they introduce one disease to expel another; but manœuvres have little place in the moral world. Statesmen will attempt to end an evil practice or institution by introducing it in a different shape, as the Siamese are said to domesticate spiders to drive out cockroaches; the profit of such devices, however, is generally dubious. Whatever the endless shifts and compromises of politics may be worth, they do not belong to the invincible strategy whenever they propose to vanquish evil by evil. Christianity implies a profounder process.

¶ Your fire will not put out your companion's fire; rather will they combine, and make a bigger and hotter blaze. Good arguments are best pressed home by soft words, and a righteous cause will be better pleaded with meekness than with passion. You remember how Jephthah's roughness to the Ephraimites, who were angry because they were not asked to help in the battle against their country's enemies, exasperated them further, and led to a terrible strife between brethren, in which thousands of lives were lost. And, on the other hand, you remember how the wise Gideon treated the same Ephraimites on a similar occasion; how he spoke gently to them, and made flattering excuses, and so pacified them that they gladly gave their help against the common foe.[2]

[1] Maurice Maeterlinck. [2] H. Macmillan.

¶ The African is now appreciating the fact that there is industrial work for him to do, that he is needed for the work, and able to do it. The missionaries had lately to refuse over one hundred and twenty who wished to be trained as carpenters. We are told that in Ngoniland education is to-day as much prized as in Great Britain. The Ngoni lived as wolves among sheep till they were tamed by the messengers of Jesus Christ. "Give me a Gospel for an assegai," one of them said to the missionary, "as the love of war has been taken out of my heart."[1]

(2) We shall not overcome evil by the *representation of it.* Ghastly things are represented in art on the plea that they will disgust. The stark expression of naturalism in literature is excused on the ground that its loathsomeness is discredited by being described. And the drama pictures vice and violence with moral design. No mistake can be greater. Wickedness at once repels and fascinates, too often in the end proving contagious and destructive. It is infectious to represent evil, often dangerous to talk of it, and even an injustice to ourselves to figure it in fancy. The morbid element in life must be dealt with in art and literature; but it ought to be described, delineated, and dramatized with utmost reticence.

¶ To make our idea of morality centre on forbidden acts is to defile the imagination and to introduce into our judgments of our fellow-men a secret element of gusto. If a thing is wrong for us, we should not dwell upon the thought of it; or we shall soon dwell upon it with inverted pleasure.[2]

¶ The fabled basilisk was said to perish if it saw itself in a mirror; it could not survive the sight of its own hideousness. Evil is not killed in this way. It feeds on the vision. With regard to the spirit of terrible cruelty which marked the Renaissance in Italy, Symonds traces it to the influence of the fiendish atrocities of the tyrant Ezzelino. "In vain was the humanity of the race revolted by the hideous spectacle. . . . It laid a deep hold upon the Italian imagination, and by the glamour of loathing that has strength to fascinate, proved in the end contagious."[3]

¶ An artist one day visited a friend of his, an undergraduate at Oxford. As he looked round upon the walls of his young friend's rooms, and saw the gross and sordid prints and photo-

[1] James Wells, *Stewart of Lovedale*, 145.
[2] R. L. Stevenson, *A Christmas Sermon.*
[3] W. L. Watkinson.

graphs, the artist's heart went out in eager longing to purify the thought and sanctify the passion of his young friend. A day or so afterwards, a beautiful picture came addressed to the Oxford undergraduate with a little note enclosed from his artist friend: "Hang this up in your room, it will banish the chorus girls and the jockeys." And it did![1]

(3) Evil is not overcome by *denunciation*. It is surprising how much efficacy is supposed to go with denunciation. Real, constructive, aggressive good is of far greater significance than eloquent invective; such invective has its place, but it must be accompanied by active practical effort, or it effects little more than summer lightning.

¶ Carlyle, in his review of Elliott, the Corn-Law Rhymer, has a most instructive passage. "We could truly wish to see such a mind as his engaged rather in considering what, in his own sphere, could be *done*, than what, in his own or other spheres, ought to be *destroyed*; rather in producing or preserving the True, than in mangling and slashing asunder the False." But denunciatory rhetoric is so much easier and cheaper than good works, and proves a popular temptation. Yet it is far better to light the candle than to curse the darkness.[2]

[1] W. S. Kelynack, in *The Young Man*, March 1911. [2] W. L. Watkinson.

Debt.

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DEBT.

Owe no man anything, save to love one another.—Rom. xiii. 8.

1. THERE are several things in the verse from which the text is taken that are very characteristic of St. Paul. First, there is the tendency to go off upon a word; the mention of the word "love" seems to suggest to the Apostle's mind his favourite thesis, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This he pursues through several verses. Again, he uses the word "owe" in two different ways: in the familiar signification of owing money, and also in the sense of duty or obligation. As if he said, "Owe no man anything but that debt which you must always owe and ought to be always paying, the endless debt of love." Thirdly, there is the tendency which we often observe in the writings of St. Paul to merge the particular in the general, the moral in the spiritual. He is constantly going back to the first principles of the love of God and of man.

2. St. Paul has spoken of the duties and the spirit befitting members of the body of Christ in their association with one another in the intercourse of private life. He now comes by a natural transition to speak of their attitude to the community at large, and especially to the authorities, whether of the city or of the empire, under whom they found themselves. That they were Christians was an additional reason why they should be good citizens. The State, like the family or the Church, is of Divine origin and appointment, with claims not to be set aside, demanding in some form the service, the support, the loyalty of all who belong to it. The persuasion that each individual has a duty to the State, must hear its call and give it his support, is not at liberty to uphold merely what is pleasing to himself, to pay or not to pay according to his own whim and fancy, leads to the

further persuasion that each has a duty to each and all around. "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law." It is a principle of universal application. It covers the vast field of mutual human obligation.

3. How Christians should behave in their relations to one another and to the world around now becomes the burden of the Apostle's counsel. Each man in the station in which he is placed is to exercise the gifts with which he has been endowed. And each man is bound to consider the rights of others. No man can live his life without learning that he cannot follow his own inclinations to the uttermost without coming into contact and conflict with inclinations different from his own. He must in some respects yield to others, or others must yield to him. He has to do with kindred, or friends, or strangers, with the sympathetic or the antagonistic, with superiors, inferiors, or equals; and the manner in which he conducts himself towards them has much to do both with the development of his own character and with the public weal.

St. Paul says, "Owe no man anything." Let there be no man who has against thee a legitimate claim which thou hast not fulfilled. The subject is Debt. Beginning with that part of it which relates to money, let us proceed to moral debts, and end with the debt of Love.

I.

Money Debts.

First, in its most prosaically simple form, "Owe no man anything" means, Have no money duties which thou canst not pay. This is a homely and excellent rule which carries us a long way in daily life. Debt is to be avoided. All money claims are to be honestly and scrupulously met. And this is nearly always possible, as we shall see if we look into the most common causes of "running into debt."

¶ Dr. Kidd had a great horror of debt. When parting with a friend whom he did not expect to see for some time, he would exhort him to "Fear God, and keep out of debt."[1]

¶ In addition to the heavy losses Lord Shaftesbury had sustained from his steward, he had incurred enormous expenses—amounting to some thousands of pounds—in inevitable lawsuits, civil and criminal, and the combination of circumstances against him produced so much anxiety that he felt incapable of any prolonged energy. The dread of debt was a "horror of great darkness" before him. "If I appear to fail in life and vigour, it is not for the want of zeal," he wrote to a friend, "but from that kind of Promethean eagle that is ever gnawing my vitals. May God be with you, and keep you *out of debt*." And in his Diary, among many expressions of sadness and almost despair, he writes: "Our Blessed Lord endured all the sorrows of humanity but that of *debt*." Perhaps it was to exemplify the truth, uttered afterwards by St. Paul, "Owe no man anything, but to serve him in the Lord." The subject was ever in his thoughts; it was "a dead weight on his back which made him totter in every effort to go forward"; it haunted him night and day, and often, in his Diary, he breaks out into a wail of lamentation: "My mind returns at every instant to the *modus operandi*. How meet the demands that must speedily be made? How satisfy the fair and righteous claims of those who only ask for their dues? How can I pursue the many objects I have in view, with this anxiety at my heart? God alone can deliver me."[2]

1. What are the common *causes* of "running into debt," as we commonly understand the phrase?

(1) *Carelessness.*—We all of us too easily slide into carelessness about money matters. In the enjoyment of the present, the hour of reckoning is comparatively distant; almost unconsciously to ourselves a certain amount of debt accumulates. While we are young we are especially open to influence of this kind. And therefore early in life we should acquire the habit of owing no man anything, and we should deal only with those who are willing that we should owe them nothing. It is good to feel somewhat uneasy while a bill remains unpaid. Every one can with a little trouble to himself see how he stands at the end of each month or of each term. He has only to cast up a few

[1] J. Stark, *Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen*, 267.
[2] F. Hodder, *Life of the Earl of Shaftesbury*, 634.

figures, to compare what he has received with what he has paid, and to satisfy himself that nothing has been omitted. Unless he wishes to be deceived, as is the case with some persons who refuse to look into their accounts, he can easily know the truth. And he is inexcusable who is careless in a matter of such importance.

¶ There is a power which may be easily acquired, but which some never acquire, and others only by dear experience—the power of understanding and doing business. It is hardly thought of by young men in comparison with intellectual gifts, and yet there is no power which conduces more to happiness and success in life. It is like a steward keeping the house in order. It is the power of managing and administering, whether in public or in private life. To be called a thorough man of business is really very high praise. It implies a clear head and mastery of details; it requires accuracy and constant attention and sound judgment. Though it begins with figures of arithmetic, it ends with a knowledge of the characters of men. It is that uncommon quality "common sense" applied to daily life. And it runs up into higher qualities, uprightness, self-denial, self-control; the honourable man of business is one of the noblest forms of English character.[1]

¶ Let me tell you a story of one of the greatest heroes of last century. Never did any man fight through a greater fight in the interest of his country and the world than Abraham Lincoln. From his early years great imaginations were in his mind, but he did not neglect plain duties. He was a postmaster in a very out-of-the-way district in Illinois. After a time the central authority found that so little business was done there that the Post Office was closed, and when it was closed, there was owing to the postal authority a sum of seventeen dollars and some odd cents, and they forgot to claim it. The years passed by, one year, two years, three years, and the money was still unclaimed. Meanwhile Abraham Lincoln had been fighting a hard fight against poverty. He had found it very hard to keep his head financially above water. It so happened that the omission was discovered after this period, and the officers of the Post Office arrived and asked Abraham Lincoln for the money which was still owing. A friend was in the room. He knew Abraham's hard circumstances. He supposed, as a matter of course, that the money would have been appropriated. He called him out of the room, and offered to lend it to him; but Abraham Lincoln smiled a little, then went up to his room and came down and

[1] B. Jowett.

produced that money, not merely in the exact amount, but in the very little coin in which it had been paid in by the village people when they bought their stamps. Here is an example of honesty, the honesty which is at the root of a noble life, the simple, central honesty about money without which, in its pure and simple detail, we can build no building that in the sight of God will stand.[1]

(2) *The love of display.*—The craving for luxuries, the passion for physical comforts, the widespread disposition to make life more ornate and less rugged, more smooth and less self-denying, are tendencies and desires concerning which at the present day there can be no dispute or any serious question. In a community this means the growth of a relaxed sense of individual honour and of common honesty. It means a disposition that will have luxuries by paying for them if it can, but which will have them anyhow. To think lightly of debt, and the personal and business discredit which comes or ought to come with it, to be loose in matters of trust, and reckless or unscrupulous in dealing with the interests of others, to maintain a scale of living which is consciously beyond one's means, and yet to go any length and run any risk rather than abridge or relinquish it, these things are so frequent, if not so familiar, as almost to have lost the power to shock us.

(3) *Envy.*—The emulation of richer neighbours and friends, the eagerness to have and wear and eat and drink what one's neighbours have to wear and eat and drink is another potent factor. We know the story. It repeats itself very often; it repeats itself not least among religious people. A young couple begin life with a small competence—enough if they would be modest in their requirements. But they have richer friends, and they think the good things of the world are meant for them too. Why should they not have them? And so they find themselves by the end of the year living beyond their income—they are in debt. There are bills they cannot pay, and there begins that long period of bondage, of misery, which comes when we are not, and ought not to be, able to look people in the face.

2. The *results* of this easy "running into debt" are always grave and often tragic.

[1] Bishop Gore.

(1) One result is *loss of independence.*—Not only are many enjoyments and comforts dependent on the possession of some amount of wealth, but also many of the higher goods of life. Often through extravagance in youth a man may be bound to some inferior or mechanical occupation; he may be deprived of the means of study or education; he may lose one of the best of all God's gifts—independence.

(2) Over the miseries of debt there have been *hearts broken*—of parents suddenly awakened out of the fool's paradise in which they have been living, of children saddened by the thought of the sorrow to others which their improvidence has caused. Every now and then the community stands aghast at some tragedy of horror in which a poor wretch, daring rather to face his Maker than his creditors, jumps off the dock or blows his brains out. A dozen of his fellows, hastily gathered and as hastily dismissed, register their verdict of "suicide occasioned by financial difficulties," and the great wave of human life rolls on and over, and the story is soon forgotten. Whereas, if we fairly realized what such things meant, we would empanel as the jury every youth who is just setting out in life, every husband who has just led home a young wife, every woman who is a mother or a daughter in so many thoughtless households, and cry to them, "See! Here is the fruit of extravagant living and chronic debt. Here is the outcome of craving for what you cannot pay for, and of spending what you have not earned. Would you be free and self-respecting and undismayed, no matter how scanty your raiment or bare your larder? Hear the Apostle's words to that Rome which had such dire need to heed them: 'Owe no man anything, save to love one another.'"

¶ Said a foremost physician in one of our foremost cities not long ago, when asked how far the facility with which American constitutions break down was occasioned by overwork, "It is not overwork that is killing the American people; neither the people who work with their brains nor those who work with their hands. I see a great many broken-down men and women. I am called to treat scores of people with shattered brains and nerves, but they are not the fruits of overwork. The most fruitful sources of physical derangement and mental and nervous

disorders in America are pecuniary embarrassments and family dissensions."[1]

¶ A question that Dr. Kidd often put to the bridegroom, immediately after the ceremony was over, was, "What makes a good husband?" The answer expected was, "The grace of God," to which the minister sometimes added, "Yes, and keeping out of debt." A young man, wanting to be fully primed before he had to submit to the fiery ordeal of the Doctor's questioning, got the whole thing up in parrot-like fashion. The usual question being put, "What makes a good husband?" the young fellow glibly blurted out, "The grace of God, sir, and keeping out of debt." The Doctor gave him a curious look, and then, with a comical twinkle, added, "I see, sir, you have been ploughing with my heifer."[2]

II.

Moral Debts.

"Render to all their dues." St. Paul does not disdain to urge upon his friends at Rome the duty of common honesty in all matters of indebtedness to the State to which they belonged. He would have them remember that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment, as in more spiritual things, so in these secular things—judgment according to their neglect.

¶ Money-making or money-saving is a great inducement to dishonour—though most persons would indignantly deny that such a thing could be possible in their case. The conferences and discussions of the passengers on an ocean liner about to land at an American port, as they consider the matter of their customs declarations, form an interesting illustration of this. It is so much easier to denounce the outrages of the use of a secret spring by the Sugar Trust to defraud the United States of millions of dollars of dodged duties than to admit that one is considering participation in just such dishonour by "interpreting" the customs requirements rather broadly as to one's personal effects. The printed circular which is given to every passenger, explaining what is required by law, is so explicit and simple that no intelligent child of twelve could readily misunderstand it. It is plainly stated that every article obtained abroad,

[1] Bishop Potter.

[2] J. Stark, *Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen*, 166.

whether by purchase or otherwise, and whether used or unused, must be declared, including all the articles upon which an exemption of duty is allowed. Moreover, each person reporting must sign his or her name to a statement declaring that every article brought from abroad, whether on the person, or in the clothing, or in the baggage, is thus mentioned. Yet the majority of otherwise reputable people on an incoming steamer, in the face of all this, will discuss whether to declare this or that article, whether such a garment, having been used, need be declared, whether this ring or pin, if worn, need be mentioned, and the person who, preferring a literal honouring of the law to deliberate, written perjury, declares everything he has, is looked upon with tolerant amusement as a rather weak-minded fanatic. It is easier to condemn public graft than private. But public and general standards of honour in any community will rise no higher than that of the majority of its individuals.[1]

1. We owe a debt to *society*.—Not to do something good, not to have an honest trade, and be making or producing something material and spiritual which is worth producing and offering to mankind, is, in itself, a sort of stealing. We owe it to society that we should be doing something worth doing. We may have means enough to be idle, as people say, but that does not exempt us. No man is justified in living who is not performing something for society.

¶ Remember we are debtors to the good by birth, but remember we may become debtors to the bad by life, and both sides of service and allegiance must be paid alike.[2]

> Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
> Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
> As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
> But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends
> The smallest scruple of her excellence
> But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
> Herself the glory of a creditor,
> Both thanks and use.[3]

(1) The employer has a debt to the employed. In society we are members one of another, and every member needs all the rest. As society is now constituted, our wealth may generally

[1] *Sunday-School Times* (Philadelphia). [2] Phillips Brooks, *Life*, 76.
[3] Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, I. i. 33.

command the service of others, but it does not make us independent of that service. Inequality does not cancel obligation. For suppose that the poor and dependent, for some reason or other, should refuse to render us the needful service. What becomes of our independence then? Is the lady housewife less dependent on her cook than the cook is on her?

(2) The employed has a debt to the employer. The responsibility is equally on this side. God expects our best work; if it be only dusting a room, He expects that it shall be done thoroughly. God's eye sees our work, whether it is thorough, whether it is the best we can give in small things or in great. Our obligation is not only to pass muster and get our wages; our obligation is to do the best we can. That is what our duty is; that is our obligation, whether the business in which we are employed is one which demands a black coat and a smart dress, or one of a much lower kind. Everywhere God expects that as we are receiving so we shall give of our best and to God "Owe no man anything."

2. We owe a debt *to those whom we can help*.—The Day of Judgment will be a surprise to us in regard to our relations to our fellow-men. You know how Christ depicts the gathering of all nations before His feet. They are the nations, not the Jews; they are those who had no special revelation from God; but He tests them by their conduct one to another, by their mercifulness. And they are astonished when they find themselves charged with having neglected Christ in His need. "Lord, when saw we thee poor, or sick, or in prison, and ministered not to thee in thy necessity?" And the reply we know very well: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." It is the surprise of the not specially enlightened multitude that they were neglecting anything that Christ could care about in neglecting the poor and the oppressed. It is the surprise continually for the enlightened consciences of us upon whom has shone the Sun of Righteousness. It is the continued surprise that we who thought ourselves walking so uprightly in the way of God were neglecting the plain and manifest duties, or duties that ought to have been plain and manifest, towards our fellow-men.

It is no excuse that my conscience did not tell me to do such

and such things. We live up to our conscience, but it is a vastly important truth that we are expected to be enlightening our conscience. Our conscience is not furnished without trouble from ourselves any more than our intellect. We have to think, we have to fight out, to open our conscience to the light of God; otherwise, like the Pharisee, like the Priest and the Levite, we are continually passing by on the other side, our conscience making no particular suggestion as to our duty towards this person or that person, our heart not awake to the claims of neighbourliness, because we have been content to take the estimate of duty which prevailed in the society about us. It is our duty not only to obey our conscience, but before that to enlighten our conscience with the light of Christ.

> If I can live
> To make some pale face brighter, and to give
> A second lustre to some tear-dimmed eye,
> Or e'en impart
> One throb of comfort to an aching heart,
> Or cheer some wayworn soul in passing by;
>
> If I can lend
> A strong hand to the fallen, or defend
> The right against a single envious strain,
> My life, though bare
> Perhaps of much that seemeth dear and fair
> To us on earth, will not have been in vain.
>
> The purest joy,
> Most near to heaven, far from earth's alloy,
> Is bidding clouds give way to sun and shine,
> And 'twill be well
> If on that day of days the angels tell
> Of me: "She did her best for one of Thine."

(1) It is our duty to be *charitable*, and to be liberal in our charity. We owe it to those who are poorer than we are. Many would tell us that the less we give away in charity the better; and such a maxim naturally falls in with the indolence or selfishness of mankind. The reason is supposed to be that charity tends to destroy independence; men will not do for themselves what others are willing to do for them. If aged persons are supported by the parish they will often be neglected by their

children; if education is free, if relief in sickness is given, there will be some corresponding relaxation of duty: the family tie will be weakened and the social state of the country will decline. Such is the argument, and there is a great deal of truth in it. In works of charity I think we might fairly be required to start with some such principle as this—that we should never relieve physical suffering at the cost of moral degradation. But may there not be modes of charity which increase the spirit of independence instead of diminishing it? A small loan of money given to a person who is engaged in a hard struggle to keep himself or his children out of the workhouse, for a purpose such as education, which is least liable to abuse, can scarcely be imagined to do harm. It would be more satisfactory if the poor were able to manage for themselves, and perhaps, when they have been educated for a generation or two, they may be in a different position, and may no longer require the assistance of others. But at present, and in this country, they must have some help from the classes above them; they have no adequate sense of their own higher wants, of education, of sanitary improvement, of the ordering of family life, and the like. We all know the difference between the lot of a parish in one of our rural districts, which has been cared for by the landlord and looked after by the ministers of religion, and one which has not. And therefore it is that great responsibilities fall upon us who have money or education, nothing short of the care of those who in the social scale are below us. Property has its duties as well as its rights, but the sense of right is apt to be stronger in most of us than the sense of duty. Instead of habitually feeling that the poor are our equals in the sight of God, that "there is nothing which we have not received," that our advantages, whatever they may be—money, talent, social position—are a trust only; instead of rendering to God the things which He has given, we claim and assert them for ourselves.

¶ Let us start fairly with the great truth: for those who possess there is only one certain duty, which is to strip themselves of what they have, so as to bring themselves into the condition of the mass that possesses nothing. It is understood, in every clear-thinking conscience, that no more imperative duty exists; but, at the same time, it is admitted that this duty,

for lack of courage, is impossible of accomplishment. For the rest, in the heroic history of the duties, even at the most ardent periods, even at the beginning of Christianity and in the majority of the religious orders that made a special cult of poverty, this is perhaps the only duty that has never been completely fulfilled.[1]

(2) The Apostle commends *hospitality*; the bringing together of our friends to eat and drink and converse, and not only those whose rank is equal to or higher than our own, and who can ask us again, but those who are a little depressed in life, and who may be said to correspond to the halt and maimed in the parable of the Marriage Supper. Hospitality may do a great deal of good in the world. It binds men together in ties of friendship and kindness; it draws them out of their isolation; it moulds and softens their characters. The pulse seems to beat quicker, and our spirits flow more freely when we are received with a hearty welcome; when the entertainer is obviously thinking not of himself but of his guests, when the conversation has health and life in it, and seems to refresh us after toil and work.

¶ Let a man, then, say, My house is here in the country, for the culture of the country; an eating-house and sleeping-house for travellers it shall be, but it shall be much more. I pray you, O excellent wife, not to cumber yourself and me to get a rich dinner for this man or this woman who has alighted at our gate, nor a bed-chamber made ready at too great a cost. These things, if they are curious in, they can get for a dollar at any village. But let this stranger, if he will, in your looks, in your accent and behaviour, read your heart and earnestness, your thought and will, which he cannot buy at any price, in any village or city, and which he may well travel fifty miles, and dine sparely and sleep hard, in order to behold. Certainly, let the board be spread and let the bed be dressed for the traveller; but let not the emphasis of hospitality lie in these things. Honour to the house where they are simple to the verge of hardship, so that there the intellect is awake and reads the laws of the universe, the soul worships truth and love, honour and courtesy flow into all deeds.[2]

Ye gave me of your broken meat,
  And of your lees of wine,
That I should sit and sing for you,
  All at your banquet fine.

[1] Maurice Maeterlinck, *Life and Flowers*, 65.

[2] Emerson.

Ye gave me shelter from the storm,
And straw to make my bed,
And let me sleep through the wild night
With cattle in the shed.

Ye know not from what lordly feast
Hither I came this night,
Nor to what lodging with the stars
From hence I take my flight.[1]

(3) It is our duty to be *friendly*. Even a single person who has strong affection and principle, and a natural gaiety of soul, may have a great influence for good; without pretending to be wiser or better than others, he may have a form of character which controls them. People hardly consider how much a little kindness may do in this sometimes troubled world. When a man is a stranger in a strange place, a sympathetic word, a silent act of courtesy makes a wonderful impression. The plant that was shrinking into itself brings forth under these genial influences leaves and flowers and fruit. There is probably no one who, if he thought about it, would not contribute much more than he does to the happiness of others.

¶ The Russian reformer, novelist and philanthropist, had an experience that profoundly influenced his career. Famine had wrought great suffering in Russia. One day the good poet passed a beggar on the street corner. Stretching out gaunt hands, with blue lips and watery eyes, the miserable creature asked an alms. Quickly the author felt for a copper. He turned his pockets inside out. He was without purse or ring or any gift. Then the kind man took the beggar's hand in both of his and said: "Do not be angry with me, brother; I have nothing with me!" The gaunt face lighted up; the man lifted his bloodshot eyes; his blue lips parted in a smile. "But you called me brother—that was a great gift." Returning an hour later he found the smile he had kindled still lingered on the beggar's face. His body had been cold; kindness had made his heart warm.[2]

¶ In one of my earliest missions we were using the communion rail for seekers, and I was much puzzled by the conduct of a middle-aged man in the second centre pew from the front. I could see he was broken-hearted and sobbing, but he did not come out. When I went to his side he said he wanted to

[1] Cicely Fox Smith. [2] N. D. Hillis, *Investment of Influence*, 41.

be saved and was willing; but he would not stir. Presently I looked at his boots and saw the reason. He mixed the plaster for some builders, and had come to the service in a pair of big ugly plaster-covered boots, and was ashamed to go to the front in them. I said to him, "Are those dirty boots your hindrance?" And his answer was, "Yes, sir, they are." "All right," I said, "put mine on to go forward in." When he saw me begin to unloose my boots and realized that I was willing to do this to help a stranger to Christ, he sprang to his feet, boots and all, and was soon kneeling with others seeking the Lord. But my little act of helpfulness so completely moved him that for two or three minutes he could do nothing but laugh and cry at the same time. Ay, and he made a lot of us who were near join him in both.[1]

III.

The Debt of Love.

"Owe no man anything, save to love one another." St. Paul bids us avoid all debt save this. This is a debt which we all owe, which we can never discharge, and which we must always be seeking to pay.

1. It is *unavoidable.*—Owe nothing, do you say? Paid for all? You may pay your tradesman for his wares, you may pay your tailor for your coat, your butcher and your cook for your meals. But what have you paid Arkwright and Watt for your cotton? What have you paid Kepler and Newton and Laplace and Bowditch for your ocean commerce? What have you paid Sir Humphry Davy for your coal? You cannot stir without encountering obligations which no conceivable amount of silver or gold can ever compensate. And now let us mount from worldly and intellectual obligations to spiritual—from that which is least to that which is highest. Who shall repay the prophets and martyrs of sacred truths for the light they have shed on our mortal path, and for the hope of immortality? Who shall satisfy the debt incurred by their testimonies and sacrifices, the dangers braved, the pains endured in the cause of mankind? Whatever he may think, every son of man is a debtor to his kind for the larger part of all that he possesses, or can by any possibility acquire. A compound and accumulated debt has

[1] Thomas Waugh, *Twenty-Three Years a Missioner*, 220.

devolved upon his head—a debt of which a fraction of the interest is all that with lifelong effort he can hope to discharge; a debt contracted in part before he saw the light, multiplied by all the years of childish imbecility and childish dependence, and consummated by drafts on years to come. Past, Present, and Future are his creditors. It needs another view than the mercantile, debt-and-credit theory of life and society to free us from the weight of obligation, the overwhelming burden of indebtedness, which the thoughtful and conscientious mind must feel, regarding the subject of benefits received and ability to pay in that light.

¶ Compared with that goodwill I bear my friend, the benefit it is in my power to render him seems small. When I have attempted to join myself to others by services, it has proved an intellectual trick—no more. They eat your service like apples, and leave you out. But love them, and they feel you, and delight in you all the time.[1]

> Love, work thy wonted miracle to-day.
> Here stand, in jars of manifold design,
> Life's bitter waters, mixed with mire and clay,
> And thou canst change them into purest wine.[2]

2. It is *commendable.*—The more we pay the more we have to contribute, and the greater the capital from which to draw. But the recognition of the debt with the consequent effort to liquidate it, though leaving us with the debt unpaid, fulfils the law of life. St. Paul bids us lead a life of universal love. If we do that we shall not only be good citizens, paying our taxes as law-abiding subjects should, but we shall be good neighbours, good husbands, good parents, good children, good masters, good servants.

¶ I often wonder why it is that we are not all kinder than we are. How much the world needs it. How easily it is done. How instantaneously it acts. How infallibly it is remembered How superabundantly it pays itself back—for there is no debtor in the world so honourable, so superbly honourable, as love.[3]

¶ A wise man will extend this lesson to all parts of life, and know that it is always the part of prudence to face every claimant and pay every just demand on your time, your talents,

[1] Emerson, *Essays*, ii. 122.
[2] Hannah Parker Kimball.
[3] Henry Drummond.

or your heart. Always pay; for first or last you must pay your entire debt. Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must pay at last your own debt. If you are wise you will dread a prosperity which only loads you with more. Benefit is the end of nature. But for every benefit which you receive, a tax is levied. He is great who confers the most benefits. He is base—and that is the one base thing in the universe—who receives favours and renders none. In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody. Beware of too much good staying on your hand. It will corrupt and breed worms. Pay it away quickly in some sort.[1]

3. It is *unpayable*.—But the effort to discharge it cancels obligation. Wherever two things are bound to each other by reciprocal, equal, and perfect love, all feeling of obligation or indebtedness one to the other ceases; there is no question of claims or dues between them, though all the giving, the technical, ostensible giving, has been confined to one side of the union and all the apparent receiving to the other. In a case of friendship, fervent and true, between two large-hearted men, if one happens to be in want and borrows and the other happens to abound and lends, although there is a technical and legal indebtedness of the borrower, there is no obligation between them, or if any, it is the lender's quite as much as the borrower's.

The obligation of love to our neighbour can never be so fulfilled that one comes to an end of it, but every fulfilment brings in its train the obligation of a new and yet higher fulfilment of the duty. It is with charity as with a flame. The more the flame burns and blazes, the more need there is of oil to feed it, and the more plentifully the oil is poured upon the flame, so much the more actively it blazes, so much the more it demands fresh nourishment. So they emulate each other, the flame and the oil, to the highest point of light and heat. Even so it is with love of our neighbour. Love begets answering love, and this answering love again demands fresh love, so that for neither is there limit or end. That is the meaning of the apostolic saying: "Owe no man anything, save to love one another."

[1] Emerson, *Essays*, i. 85.

¶ No man becomes independent of his fellow-men excepting in serving his fellow-men.[1]

Dig channels for the streams of Love,
Where they may broadly run;
And Love has overflowing streams
To fill them every one.

But if at any time thou cease
Such channels to provide,
The very founts of Love for thee
Will soon be parched and dried.

For we must share, if we would keep,
That good thing from above;
Ceasing to give, we cease to have—
Such is the law of Love.[2]

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Addresses*, 21. [2] R. C. Trench.

Love and the Law.

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Love and the Law.

Love is the fulfilment of the law.—Rom. xiii. 10.

1. "Of Law," says Hooker, in the celebrated sentence with which he closes the first book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity*,—"Of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both Angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

¶ I cannot fancy to my self what the Law of Nature means, but the Law of God. How should I know I ought not to steal, I ought not to commit Adultery, unless some body had told me so? Surely 'tis because I have been told so? 'Tis not because I think I ought not to do them, nor because you think I ought not; if so, our minds might change, whence then comes the restraint? from a higher Power, nothing else can bind. I cannot bind myself, for I may untye myself again; nor an equal cannot bind me, for we may untye one another. It must be a superior Power, even God Almighty. If two of us make a Bargain, why should either of us stand to it? What need you care what you say, or what need I care what I say? Certainly because there is something about me that tells me *Fides est servanda*, and if we after alter our minds, and make a new Bargain, there's *Fides servanda* there too.[1]

2. There is a law which men recognize always, even when they refuse to obey it. There is a still, small voice that speaks within, which tells a man that the right is to be followed and the wrong is to be shunned, which condemns a man when he has succumbed to the wrong, and refused the right. To all mankind,

[1] John Selden, *Table Talk*, 66.

said a pagan writer, the voice of conscience is the voice of God. Things may fill us with amazement in this world of perplexities and antitheses, but none of us will refuse to recognize that morality needs no defence. For man, however imperfect his moral ideal may be, will recognize that if he does not obey the voice of conscience, at any rate he ought to do so; and there is a power within, higher than himself, nobler than himself, which speaks to him without the voice of any preacher, "This ought ye to have done."

3. The Jews designated by the term "law" the entire Old Testament, less in the literary sense, according to which the "prophets" were added, to complete the idea of the volume, than in the theological sense, all the other books being thus regarded as corollaries of the Mosaic legislation. It may be boldly affirmed that in most of the passages in which St. Paul makes use of the word *law*, it is in the historical or literary sense; the allusion is to the Old Testament as a whole, not to the Pentateuch in particular. On this account the term has most frequently that which was called in the old theology the *economic* signification—that is, it stands for the entire Old Testament economy.

4. But in the present passage, as often elsewhere in St. Paul's Epistles, the word "law" signifies purely and simply the Law of Moses as contained in the Pentateuch, or even more particularly, the Ten Commandments. It is true that the word in the original is without the article—"law" simply, not "the law"; and it is important to observe that distinction generally. As Lightfoot says: "The distinction between "law" and "the law" is very commonly disregarded, and yet it is full of significance. Behind the concrete representation—the Mosaic Law itself—St. Paul sees an imperious principle, an overwhelming presence, antagonistic to grace, to liberty, to spirit, and (in some aspects), even to life—abstract law, which, though the Mosaic ordinances are its most signal and complete embodiment, nevertheless is not exhausted therein, but exerts its crushing power over the conscience in diverse manifestations. The one—the concrete and special—is "the law"; the other—the abstract and universal—is "law."[1]

[1] *Revision of the New Testament*, 110.

But in spite of this, there is little doubt that in the present passage the Apostle's thought is of the Law of Moses, and that it is concentrated on that part of the Law of Moses which we call the Decalogue. Not that we are bound to restrict the law which is fulfilled by love to the Ten Commandments. While the argument of the passage is satisfied in that way, love meets not only the negative demands of the Decalogue but also the positive precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. For viewed in its idea and essence as a revelation of God's will, "law" requires for its fulfilment that we should not only cease to do evil, but also learn to do well.

The subject is the fulfilment of the Law. Its fulfilment is to be contrasted with partial or imperfect obedience to it. So we have these three divisions—

I. Obeying the Law.
II. Fulfilling the Law.
III. Love the Fulfilment of the Law.

I.

Obeying the Law.

There are ways in which the Law may be obeyed without being fulfilled.

1. The law may be obeyed through *fear*; or on account of the punishment which would follow its violation. A person may pay his debts, for instance, because, if he does not, he will go to prison. But you can never be quite sure that the law is really obeyed when you appeal only to fear. If a man is a clever scoundrel he may avoid detection, or, if detected, he may perhaps be able to make his escape before the punishment can be inflicted. And a stupid scoundrel, probably not knowing that he is stupid, will often run a similar risk. Thus, so long as the law depends solely upon fear for its fulfilment, however vigilant may be our police, however upright our courts of justice, however severe may be the condemnation of society, we have no security for its fulfilment, and as a matter of fact we know that it is constantly being violated.

And certainly the law of God can never be obeyed through fear. Despots may feel flattered as they see a population pale

with terror at their power. They may think themselves all the safer when their subjects quail before them. And they may not care much, if only outward obedience is rendered, whether there be behind it a feeling of loyalty or not. But we cannot submit to or obey God in any such manner. He is a King and a Father who asks for love—asks for it because He gives His love to us. He says, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God"; not, "Thou shalt *dread* the Lord thy God." He is a Monarch whose laws we cannot obey except by loving Him. If there are words we would speak, but that we dread God, we have spoken them in our hearts. If there are deeds we would do, but that we dread God, we have already done them in our hearts. He clearly and strikingly discriminates between what seems obedience and what *is*. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."

¶ Every father fathoms the secret of obedience. You know that it is not worth the name of obedience if your child serves you from dread of consequences. You may have two children, one of whom is self-willed and fulfils your commands only from fear. He may fulfil them with strict literalness, doing exactly what you order, and no more. He may be most careful not to be found wanting in any particular, but you have reason to know that this is from no love of you or of your commands, but from dread of the consequences. Another obeys because he loves; perhaps he is not quite so punctilious in his obedience as the other; there may be occasional failure, occasional forgetfulness, blunders every now and then; but you know that, under all, there is a real love which is never more wounded than when you are wounded. Which of these two do you feel most fulfils your law? which meets most your fatherly sense of what is due to you? in which of them have you most confidence, not only when they are in your sight, but when they are out of your sight? You do not hesitate about the answer; and if the first child were only to do some act of obedience to you because he had begun to love you, you would feel that that one act weighed more than all the deeds of hollow servility he had ever performed. You would feel that love was the fulfilling of the law.[1]

Fear acts chiefly as a restraint. It has checked many in a career of wickedness, and brought a few, perhaps, to the scrupulous observance of some precepts. In all things which are thought

[1] E. Mellor.

necessary to avert vengeance, it has often a strong influence, and its effects may even seem greater for a time than that which better principles produce; but it never yet brought a man with his whole heart into the service of Christ; nor does it lead to anything from which we think we may with safety be excused. It neither sets the affection on things above, nor kindles any zeal in the cause of the Redeemer. The dread of God's anger will not make us cheerfully submissive to His will, or cherish the gentler graces which He requires from us to mankind.

While the law on stone is written,
Stone-like is the mighty word;
We with chilling awe are smitten,
Though the word is Thine, O Lord.
Firm it is as mountains old,
As their snowy summits cold.[1]

2. The law may be obeyed from motives of *self-interest*; there is profit in obedience. To serve for profit is only the other side of the same spirit that serves from fear. Obedience is profitable. But there is a great difference between pursuing a course which is profitable, and pursuing it *because* it is profitable. A faithful servant of a monarch may be paid for his service; but if he serves only for his pay, he is not a faithful servant. The obedience we render only for the sake of what it will bring, we should not render at all if it brought us nothing; and in such a case the first and ruling motive is not service, but pay.

We cannot in this spirit obey the law of God. The rewards of God, the promised joys and glories of heaven, are far more than the wages of service. The crowns are not given to those who have served for gain; they are given to those who have served from love, who have found the service itself to be a joy, who would be content to serve for love for ever, even if there were no other recompense.

¶ We sometimes meet with men who never commit any punishable injury, but who are to the last degree cold, callous, hard-hearted, and selfish. We are quite sure they would not rob or murder us, but we are equally sure they would not move their little finger to do us any good, would not raise their hand to save us from destruction. These men do incalculable mischief,

[1] T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*, 29.

and that of the worst kind. They injure the moral nature of their neighbours, whose best affections are dwarfed, or it may be destroyed, by their inhumanity, just as fruit is blighted by the frost. They do all that in them lies to make other men into moral pigmies like themselves. Hence, though they are not guilty of any punishable breach of the law, they are guilty of violating it—they do ill to their neighbours.[1]

3. The law may be obeyed in the *letter* while its spirit is violated. The letter of the law is enforced by the punishment of society, and just because it is so enforced it is of necessity very limited in its scope. As Bentham explains in his principles of jurisprudence, the written law only takes cognizance of vices which can be clearly defined and readily distinguished. If it attempted to cover a larger area—if, for example, it endeavoured to punish ingratitude or unkindness—it would do more harm than good. It is difficult, or rather impossible, to find out when and to what extent such sins have been committed. If, therefore, the law attempted to deal with them, it would be in constant danger of punishing the less guilty or even the innocent, and of allowing the more guilty to get off scot-free. And, further, this unjust administration of justice would involve an amount of inquisitive surveillance which would be more hurtful to society than the evils which, after all, it failed to prevent. For these reasons, then, the *spirit* of the law, which is "Thou shalt do no ill to thy neighbour," has to be narrowed in the *letter*, where we read only, "Thou shalt not injure thy neighbour in a certain few definite ways." From this, of course, it follows that the man who is contented with keeping the letter of the law is most undoubtedly guilty of violating its spirit. He goes but a little way along the path of duty.

This was the sin of the Pharisees, the class that Christ denounced most strongly, and the only class that He did denounce. At the time when Jesus first began, with His Gospel of repentance and of Divine love, to teach the simple fishermen of Galilee, scribes and Pharisees had managed, by their interpretation of the law, which was at once a law of religion and a law of righteousness, to bind heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, and to reduce the simple moral code to a series of minute ritual

[1] A. W. Momerie.

observances. He was held to fulfil the law who could remember what to do ceremonially, and he was held to have disregarded the law, however faithfully, kindly, and nobly he might be living, who had forgotten or who never knew what the proper ritual was. Then came Jesus and swept it all away; and, humanly speaking, He died for doing it. His protest was entered in the name of religion against the burdensome ritual and minute useless observances with which men were troubled in His day.

The Pharisees were active and zealous. The Gospel was an active religion, and Pharisaism was an active religion; particular virtues were common to both. But the Gospel was an active religion founded upon *love*, and Pharisaism was an active religion founded upon *egoism*.

In our own day also a conscious obedience to particular laws of the Gospel determines the lives of large numbers among us; we pray, we worship, we learn the knowledge of Divine things, we give alms, we even fast, we follow the approved methods of repentance, we practise intercession, we bring all our daily interests,—our politics, our friendships, our households, to the feet of God in prayer; we could not be safe or happy for half a day of our lives without God being in all our thoughts; yet when our work for God is over, or even in the dread intervals of silence which stop the heart's pulses in the stir of work, there comes to all of us this question, "Have I, after all, any true love for God? If God and I were alone in the world where would be my love for God? If there were no work to be done—that work which I love—should I love God at all?"

¶ I put a loaded gun in the corner of a room, and tell my child not to touch it. There is a rule or maxim. Knowing nothing of the reason of my command, his plain duty as a child is implicit servile obedience to my order; his conscience should be grieved if, even to prevent its being broken by a fall, he is induced to touch it, because there is a harm in doing it which is to him mysterious and unknown. But suppose him older, and suppose him to understand by natural intelligence, that the reason of my prohibition was to prevent the possibility of its exploding, and suppose him to see a sheet of paper fall from the table on fire close to it, what would his duty be—to cleave to the maxim, or to cut himself adrift from it? Surely to snatch up the forbidden gun directly. His first duty, in point of time,

is to obey the rule; his first in point of importance, is to break it. Indeed, this is the very essence, according to St. Paul, of the difference between the legal and the Gospel state. In the legal state we are under tutors, governors, and must not go beyond rules; for rules are disciplining us to understand the principles of themselves. But in the Gospel state we are redeemed from this bondage, serving in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. We discern *principles*, and are loyal to them; we use rules or dispense with them, as they save or destroy the principle for which they exist.[1]

II.

Fulfilling the Law.

1. To fulfil a thing is to fill it full, so that no part of it is left void or empty. It is an image taken from a cup filled to the brim, as full as it can hold; and it is applied to a number of things both in Scripture and in common life. We read in the Book of Exodus, that Pharaoh's taskmasters compelled the children of Israel to *fulfil* their daily tasks of making brick as heretofore, after they had taken away the straw from them. In other words, they had to give in quite as many bricks as they had been accustomed to make when the straw was duly supplied them. They were not to diminish the tale or quantity of bricks demanded of them. And in the same way, to fulfil a promise is to keep it fully and completely; and also if we fulfil a duty we discharge it fully and completely, leaving no part of it unperformed.

Now this is what St. Paul means by "fulfilling the law." He means that we should do to the very utmost everything required of us. It is incumbent upon us to give in every single one of the tale of bricks, or rather of the fine hewn stones, which God demands from us towards building up the edifice of duty. We must not, we dare not, break, or neglect, or overlook any part of any one of the commandments, for the reason that it is a little one, or that it is a trifle, that it cannot signify, that there is no use in being too particular. We are to remember the words of the Sermon on the Mount, where our Lord says that whosoever

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 358.

shall break one of the least of these commandments or shall teach men so, shall be reckoned the least in the Kingdom of heaven.

¶ Men are apt to think that they cannot have too much of a good thing—too much piety, too much religious feeling, too much attendance at the public worship of God. They forget the truth which the old philosophy taught, that the life of man should be a harmony; not absorbed in any one thought, even of God, or in any one duty or affection, but growing up as a whole to the fulness of the perfect man. That is a maimed soul which loves goodness and has no love of truth, or which loves truth and has no love of goodness. The cultivation of one part of religion to the exclusion of another seems often to exact a terrible retribution both in individual characters and in churches. There is a Nemesis of believing all things, or indeed of any degree of intellectual dishonesty, which sometimes ends in despair of all truth.[1]

2. The fulfilling of the law, therefore, is keeping it in its fullest, its deepest, its most spiritual meaning. Every angry feeling, every wanton thought, every uncharitable and suspicious thought, every unfair advantage and dishonest trick, however it may be allowed to pass free by human laws, and however customary in men's dealings with each other,—all these, and all manner of greediness after the things of this world, are breaches of one or other of the commandments. Nothing short of perfect kindness, perfect purity, perfect honesty, perfect truth, and perfect temperance will fulfil the law. Nothing short of perfect kindness, because every degree of unkindness is forbidden by the sixth commandment; nothing short of perfect purity, because all impurity is forbidden by the seventh; nothing short of perfect honesty, because every kind of dishonesty is forbidden by the eighth; nothing short of perfect truth, because all falsehood is condemned by the ninth; nothing short of perfect temperance, because all greediness and covetous desires are forbidden by the tenth commandment. Such are the vast claims which God's law has upon us, when taken in its full extent.

¶ When Christ denounced the breaking of any of the commandments, He spoke on the very point that St. Paul is speaking of. His subject was "fulfilling the law." "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am

[1] Benjamin Jowett.

not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever *therefore* shall break one of these least commandments, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you,"—I, the Eternal Word and Infallible Truth—"that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Or we might paraphrase it thus: "I am come to fulfil the law of Moses; I am come to show you the exceeding depth of God's commandments; I am come to show you how much they require of every one, when they are taken in their full meaning. This is one object of My mission. If any man, then, fancies that I am come to bring a licence for sinning—if a person conceives he may continue in sin, because I have brought pardon and grace into the world—he takes a mistaken view of the object of My coming. My Father sent Me not to abolish holiness, or to diminish aught from its claims, but to place it on a firmer foundation, and to give it its true scope; so that it shall embrace, not only the outward actions of men, but their very thoughts and inmost wishes. I am not come to make the law void, but to *fill it up*."

III.

How Love Fulfils the Law.

"Love is the fulfilment of the law." If we had perfect love for our neighbour we should keep the commandments perfectly: and in proportion as love fills us, in the same proportion shall we fulfil them. Love will enable us to keep the commandments. That is the Apostle's argument.

1. The love which is here spoken of, and which the writers of the New Testament set before us on every occasion when they teach about the inner principle of Christianity, is a reverent good-will, not only from man to God, but from man to man. The very same word which describes love to God is used by New Testament teachers, by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and by John the Divine, to describe the relations which should exist between man and man. The same quality of reverent affection which is due from man to God is due from man to man.

It is not easy for men to comprehend the full meaning of this term "love." We identify it with amiability and mildness and sentimentality. We confuse it with the petty standards of love

that are partial, weak, and blind: that limit their favours to one or two; that are no more than a flush in the blood or a thrill along the nerves. Love as St. Paul means it, love as it was newly and divinely characterized by the Saviour, is a broader and more comprehensive thing than any of these,—rises higher, runs deeper, sweeps around larger interests, includes nobler ideals. It is a feeling which pervades all conduct, governs all motives, sustains every duty, extends to all souls. It is the kindliness which prompts to courtesy, the sensitive fairness which insists on perfect equity, the sympathy which reaches after the lost, the mercy which softens the doom of crime. And it is the strength and the courage which dare to undertake severities which are destined to end in blessings; to be a little hard in order to be very tender; and to go forth with the scourge against offenders, and draw the sword of retribution against the oppressor and his hard-hearted crew. And, over and above all these peculiarities, love rises above this earth and the humanity it supports, and exalts the soul to heaven's gates; reaches out for God, and loses itself in the Being whence its holy impulse was derived. That is what Christianity means by love.

> Oh, there are moments in man's mortal years,
> When for an instant that which long has lain
> Beyond our reach, is on a sudden found
> In things of smallest compass, and we hold
> The unbounded shut in one small minute's space,
> And worlds within the hollow of our hand,—
> A world of music in one word of love,
> A world of love in one quick wordless look,
> A world of thought in one translucent phrase,
> A world of memory in one mournful chord,
> A world of sorrow in one little song.
> Such moments are man's holiest,—the full-orbed
> And finite form of Love's infinity.[1]

2. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." St. Paul seems to limit the action of love here to doing no ill. That is simply because the commandments are mostly negative; and that they are is a sad token of the lovelessness natural to us all. But do we love ourselves only

[1] Henry Bernard Carpenter, *Liber Amoris*.

negatively, or are we satisfied with doing ourselves no harm? That stringent pattern of love to others prescribes not only degree, but manner. It teaches that true love to men is not weak indulgence, but must sometimes chastise, and thwart, and always must seek their good, and not merely their gratification. Whoever will honestly seek to apply that negative precept of working no ill to others, will find it positive enough. We harm men when we fail to help them. If we can do them a kindness, and do it not, we do them ill. Non-activity for good is activity for evil.

¶ Some years ago we were reading day by day of a murder that had been committed in the swamps of Niagara, and such was the solidarity of the human race that that isolated deed was discussed right round the globe. We saw it all enacted, like some stage drama, before our very eyes. We saw this man, an Oxford graduate, a man of good family, a man reared in honourable traditions, leading his victim on and on to some lonely spot in that dismal swamp, and then the pistol shot rings, and without remorse he turns away, leaving his victim—who has eaten with him, jested with him, trusted in him—to die miserably and unpitied. We tried this man for murder, but that red blossom of murder was only the outward sign of something else. Go deeper to the root, and you will see that he wants to steal, and he covets, and he lies before he wants to murder. These were the active causes of the crime; this was the black sap that fed the tree upon which this hideous blossom of murder at last sprang into life. Reduce all these things to a sentence, and you have said everything when you have said, "This man did not love." If he had loved his friend he would not have lied to him; if he had loved him he would not have coveted his money; still less could he have pushed him out of life for the sake of paltry gain, which—such is the irony of crime—he never even handled. For that unhappy youth love would literally have been the "fulfilling of the law."[1]

3. Love fulfils the commandments. We may take the commandments one by one, and apply this test to them, and we shall see at once that they would not have been needed if only men had loved one another. Do we need to be told not to murder any one we love, not to defraud him, not to covet his possessions, not to disbonour his home? Why, we not only cannot do it, we simply cannot conceive the thought of doing it. If we have love, we cannot help keeping the law. If we have love, we cannot help

[1] W. J. Dawson.

being moral. It may seem but a scanty equipment to produce perfection, and so the seven notes of music may seem to be a scanty equipment to produce the heaven-born melodies of a Handel or a Beethoven. But see how they use them,—of what infinite and glorious combinations are they capable! How the highest and deepest emotions of our nature find liberation and a language as we thrill to the majestic strains which purify and exalt us, which give us visions of truth, of self, of heaven, of God, and of the joy of God, which no speech could utter and no articulate array of words could express. Yet there are but seven notes of music in it all, something a child might learn in an hour, but which a Handel or a Beethoven cannot exhaust in a lifetime. So it is with this supreme quality of love! It is capable of all but infinite combinations and interpretations; it utters the grand music of heroism and the soft lute-music of courtesy; it is patriotism, it is altruism, it is martyrdom; it stoops to the smallest things of life and it governs the greatest; it controls the temper and it regulates the reason; it extirpates the worst qualities and it develops and refines the best; it reforms and transforms the whole man into the image of God, for there is no height of character to which love cannot lift a man, and there is no height of character possible without it. Love is character. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

¶ Love is so comprehensive a grace that it includeth all the rest; and so is in effect the fulfilling of the whole law. There is a thread of love which runneth through all the particular duties and offices of Christian life, and stringeth them like so many rich pearls into one single chain.[1]

4. Love is the fulfilling of the law for three reasons:—

(1) *It removes the bias of self-love* that is in our nature.—That there is such a bias in our nature is plain. Else why should we all be such unfair judges in our own case, and, comparatively speaking, such fair judges in matters we are not concerned with? Any man of common sense can see the rights of a case, where the question is between neighbour and neighbour. Not one in ten, or in fifty, or in a hundred, can see the right of the case, when the question is between his neighbour and himself. Where self is concerned, the weight of self-love is sure to slip into one of the

[1] Bishop Sanderson.

scales; and so they become uneven. Nor is this to be remedied, except by putting into the opposite scale that love to our neighbour which Christ commands us to cherish.

Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel who can bid the gates unroll;
And when he comes to call thee, arise and follow fast;
His way may lie through darkness, but it leads to light at last.[1]

(2) *It gives us sympathy*, and is the only effective principle of duty.—This love is far more amenable to reason than the passion which goes by the same name. "We may set ourselves," as George Eliot has put it,—we may studiously set ourselves "to learn something of the poetry and pathos lying in the experience of all human souls—poetry and pathos that look out through dull grey eyes, and that speak in a voice of quite ordinary tones." We may know something of this if we will only *think*. And such knowledge will inevitably give birth to sympathy.

¶ If ever you see in your neighbour the downcast, suffering, timid look, that unmistakable air which marks so often the first apprenticeship to hardness, the beginning of the death of finer feelings, does it strike you to show kindness, to administer comfort or ensure protection? Does it not sometimes rather happen that you help to break the bruised reed, that you show contempt or indifference when you should show loving-kindness, or that you even join in mocking or cruelty when you ought to have put your heel upon it? "Do as you would be done by" is only a low form of practical maxim, but even this is very often higher than our practice. Does it never happen that you get your pleasure out of annoyance to another? Does it never happen that you allow this to be done by some one near you? Does a stranger coming amongst us young, inexperienced, or it may be with some peculiarity, never find his life made miserable by some cruel, or hard, or low-toned neighbour?[2]

Do thy day's work, my dear,
Though fast and dark the clouds are drifting near,
Though time has little left for hope and very much for fear.

Do thy day's work, though now
The hand must falter and the head must bow,
And far above the failing foot shows the bold mountain brow

[1] Henry van Dyke.
[2] Bishop Percival, *Some Helps for School Life*, 175.

Yet there is left for us,
Who on the valley's verge stand trembling thus,
A light that lies far in the west—soft, faint, but luminous.

We can give kindly speech
And ready, helping hand to all and each,
And patience to the young around by smiling silence teach.

We can give gentle thought,
And charity, by life's long lesson taught,
And wisdom, from old faults lived down, by toil and failure wrought.

We can give love, unmarred
By selfish snatch of happiness, unjarred
By the keen aims of power or joy that make youth cold and hard.

And, if gay hearts reject
The gifts we hold, would fain fare on unchecked
On the bright roads that scarcely yield all that young eyes expect,

Why, do thy day's work still.
The calm, deep founts of love are slow to chill;
And heaven may yet the harvest yield, the work-worn hands to fill.

(3) *It springs from love to God.*—There is no true love of man unconnected with the love of God, nor any which does not originate there. The feeling which takes the name of benevolence is too fickle in its nature, too narrow in its range, too easily checked and extinguished, to fulfil, in any due degree, the duties with which God charges us towards each other. To do this we must love each other for His sake after His pattern, and by extending to them the love we bear to Himself. Then it becomes Christian charity, and is equal to every precept. "Love worketh no ill" to our neighbour; it "thinketh" none. It "suffereth long and is kind." In no case "doth it behave itself unseemly." It furnishes unto all good works. It is a principle broad enough for the whole range of our duty; and to be improving in every grace of the Gospel, we need only to be growing perfect in love.

He who loves his neighbour also fulfils the commandments written in the first table of the law. Because he is God's child and therefore must needs have loved God first, and have thus conformed himself to the obligations of the whole law, he loves his neighbour with a pure heart and true charity. He can, in point of fact, keep the commandments which concern his neighbour only through love of God. For, as the law of Moses was powerless to produce in the heart of the Jew that true love for his fellow-men, without which the law itself could not be fulfilled, which is the effect only of grace, so only those who are filled with the love of God, and possess the grace which grows from this love, can really possess that true love to man which is the fulfilment of the law.

When thy heart, love filled, grows graver,
  And eternal bliss looks nearer,
Ask thy heart, nor show it favour,
  Is the gift or giver dearer?

Love, love on; love higher, deeper;
  Let love's ocean close above her;
Only, love thou more love's keeper,
  More, the love-creating lover.

5. Love not only fulfils the precepts of the law, it also completes and perfects the law itself. No law can provide for all cases that may come before us in the course of life. Every law can only lay down general principles and rules, and at the utmost can only name some cases in particular. Much less can a law-giver prescribe exactly the application of his law to the individual case; for the application must necessarily differ with the difference between men, their actions, and the accompanying circumstances. Love alone can take account of all the cases that occur in human life, of all men and their actions, all their surrounding circumstances and peculiarities, and provide completely and suitably for all. In this sense love is not only the fulfilling, but also the fulness (*plenitudo*), *i.e.* the completion and perfection of the law. Where love rules wholly and perfectly, there the precepts of the law become superfluous, and the rule of love takes the place of law; where love withdraws and becomes cold, there the machinery

of the law must come in, and the more love removes herself, so much the more must the legal machinery rule until it sinks to the slavery of simple government by police.

> A mightier church shall come, whose covenant word
> Shall be the deeds of love. Not *Credo* then,—
> *Amo* shall be the password through its gates.
> Man shall not ask his brother any more,
> "Believest thou?" but "Lovest thou?" and all
> Shall answer at God's altar, "Lord, I love."
> For Hope may anchor, Faith may steer, but Love,
> Great Love alone, is captain of the soul.[1]

[1] Henry Bernard Carpenter, *Liber Amoris*.

Ready for the Dawning.

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Ready for the Dawning.

The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.—Rom. xiii. 12.

1. There can hardly be any doubt that in the apostolic age the prevailing belief was that the Second Coming of the Lord was an event to be expected in any case shortly and probably in the lifetime of many of those then living; it is also probable that this belief was shared by the Apostles themselves. For example, so strongly did such views prevail among the Thessalonian converts that the death of some members of the community filled them with perplexity, and even when correcting these opinions St. Paul speaks of "we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of our Lord"; and in the Second Epistle, although he corrects the erroneous impression which still prevailed, that the coming was immediate, and shows that other events must precede it, he still contemplates it as at hand. Similar passages may be quoted from all or most of the Epistles, although there are others which suggest that it is by his own death, not by the coming of Christ, that St. Paul expects to attain the full life in Christ to which he looked forward.

2. Now, our Lord plainly did not mean His disciples to know when His judgment was to be made manifest, and St. Paul apparently recognized this (1 Thess. v. 2: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night"), so that his immediate anticipation of the end can never have been part of his faith—never more than the reflection of the eager desire which filled the heart of the Church. On the other hand, our Lord did mean His disciples to go on expecting Him. Thus St. Paul's admonition is as applicable as ever. The future of the world and of each nation and institution is precarious: things which seem solid

and strong may crumble and melt; how soon God is to make plain His judgments, in part or in whole, we do not know; when each one of us is to pass by death to the great account we do not know. There is no reasonable attitude towards the unknown coming of judgment except to be ready, and, though the darkness of the alienated and godless world is all around us, to live as children of the light eagerly expecting the dawning of the day.

¶ The Apostles lived in anticipation of an immediate end of the world, no doubt; but I cannot see that this, on the whole, was anything but good. It was this which drew the Christians so closely together—made their union so remarkable, and startled the world, to which, otherwise, the new religion would have appeared merely a Philosophy, and not a Life. Besides, are we sure that aught less strong than this hope could have detached men so instantly and entirely from the habits of long sin; or that, on natural principles and without a miracle, even the Apostles could have been induced to crowd so much superhuman energy into so small a compass?[1]

3. But to meet Christ we must be like Christ. And to be like Christ we must be in Christ, clothed with His righteousness, invested with His new nature, fighting with the weapons of His victorious manhood. The "evil" which is in ourselves, the unregulated flesh, we can only "overcome with good"—the good which is Jesus Himself: for it is no longer we that live in our bare selves, but Christ that liveth in us. We are baptized into Him—Christ is "put on" in baptism by all (Gal. iii. 27)—we possess His spirit, we eat His flesh and drink His blood. What remains is practically to clothe ourselves in Him, appropriating and drawing out into ourselves by acts of our will His very present help in trouble. So can we become like Him, and be fitted to see Him as He is.

¶ This passage of which the text is a part had an important influence on St. Augustine's life; for when the child's voice had bidden him "open and read," these were the words upon which he opened, and which sealed his conversion to the faith he served so nobly—"not in revelling and drunkenness, . . . but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." "I had no wish," he tells us, "to read any further, nor was there any need. For immediately at

[1] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 398.

the end of this sentence, as if a light of certainty had been poured into my heart, all the shadows of doubt were scattered."[1]

The text falls into two main divisions—

I. The Approach of the Day.

II. The Preparation for it.

I.

The Approach of the Day.

"The night is far spent, and the day is at hand."

St. Paul here uses a material illustration to set forth a spiritual fact. It is a picture of the morning with which he presents us; and, if we draw the idea out, we find that it consists of three stages. First, there is the night; that portion of the twenty-four hours during which the sun is below the horizon; that ever-recurring period, when the only light available comes from the faint shining of the stars, or at best from the pale reflected beams of the moon; that succession of hours, which we ordinarily describe as the time of darkness. Next, there is the dawn. In this, the night is far spent; the obscurity begins to pass off. The sun, indeed, is not yet above the horizon, but the stars fade and disappear, and the moon loses her lustre; there is an increasing brightness in the eastern sky; clear rays shoot up towards the zenith, and at length the shining disc of the great light-bearer becomes visible over the dark shoulder of the earth. The day is at hand! And, lastly, after the dawn comes the day itself. There is no longer a contest between light and darkness; the sun is risen in his power; the shadows have been dispelled and light prevails triumphantly throughout the whole hemisphere. The *Night*, the *Dawn*, the *Day*. St. Paul would be sensible of the poetic fascination of these, but he presents them with a definite object in view—to commend to his readers' attention the spiritual analogies bodied forth by them.

i. The Night.

1. In the *night* St. Paul sees a picture of the original spiritual state of those to whom he is writing. From such passages in

[1] *Confessions*, viii. 2.

the Epistle as, "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (xv. 15), we learn that a great proportion of them must have been born and brought up in heathenism; but other and important parts of the letter are evidently addressed to those who were originally Jews. Now, when the Apostle used the word "night" to describe the early religious condition of his correspondents, he must, of course, have been thinking first and foremost of the Gentile section of the Roman Church. Notwithstanding the glitter of their civilization, the inhabitants of the imperial city had been lost in a state of religious darkness. As much as to the Athenians God was to them "Unknown." The Sun of their souls was deep below the horizon. The official religion was believed in by few or none, and, if it had been believed in, it would have taught its deluded votaries to acknowledge "lords many and gods many."

Even the philosophers, who tried to think out something better than the popular religion, illuminated the spiritual darkness only as the stars light up the gloom of natural night. The Stoics knew of nothing better than a mechanical fate overruling all things; and the Epicureans, despairing of finding the truth, taught only some variation or another of the precept, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may!" Thus in the past, God had been a God who had hidden Himself from those Gentiles to whom St. Paul was now writing.

2. But, having thus used the term "night" in connection with the converts from heathenism, the Apostle was willing to let it stand as a description of the original condition of the Jewish Christians in the imperial city also. He habitually thought of his own unconverted days as a season of gloom, and therefore it came natural to him to regard that of his brethren after the flesh in the same light. Thus had those to whom he was writing in the world's capital, both Jews and Gentiles, each in their owu particular way, been till recently in a condition of spiritual darkness.

¶ The comparison of night is used of Christ's absence from His Church, and of the brooding darkness which overcasts the

world. The night is the emblem of indolence and lethargy. And are not the majority of men sluggish towards God, however keen and alert they may be towards the concerns of this world? Night is also the time of illusion. Ugliness and beauty, gold and stone, friend and foe, are all one when night has drawn her curtains. Are not most men mistaking the counterfeit for the real, the false for the true? Again, night is pregnant with danger. Whether to the traveller across the morass, or to the ship feeling her way along a rock-bound coast, darkness is danger. "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth, because that the darkness hath blinded his eyes." For vast tracks of time "darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people"—the night of Satan's reign, of the power of darkness, of creation's travail and anguish, of the absence of Jesus from His Church.[1]

All moveless stand the ancient cedar-trees
  Along the drifted sandhills where they grow;
And from the dark west comes a wandering breeze,
  And waves them to and fro.

A murky darkness lies along the sand,
  Where bright the sunbeams of the morning shone,
And the eye vainly seeks by sea and land
  Some light to rest upon.

No large pale star its glimmering vigil keeps;
  An inky sea reflects an inky sky,
And the dark river, like a serpent, creeps
  To where its black piers lie.

Strange salty odours through the darkness steal,
  And, through the dark, the ocean-thunders roll;
Thick darkness gathers, stifling, till I feel
  Its weight upon my soul.

I stretch my hands out in the empty air;
  I strain my eyes into the heavy night;
Blackness of darkness!—Father, hear my prayer!
  Grant me to see the light![2]

ii. The Dawn.

1. As St. Paul thinks of his correspondents while he is writing he describes them as living in the *dawn*. "The night," he says

[1] F. B. Meyer.

[2] George Arnold, *In the Dark*.

"has advanced towards the dawn" (so the word may be translated). When the sun begins to rise towards the eastern ridges from below, the darkness takes flight and shining rays show themselves increasingly along the horizon. Even so, the Apostle says, through their late conversion to Christ, the gloom of heathenism is effectually lifting from these Roman disciples, and the true spiritual light is shining ever more and more upon them unto the perfect day.

2. But why only "unto the perfect day"? Why speak of them as only in the dawn and not declare them to be already in the perfect day, seeing that they are in Christ? In the general current of New Testament teaching two states, and only two, are broadly defined and distinguished: there are "children of the night" and "children of the day." Nor is any interval generally assumed between the "darkness" of sin and the "marvellous light" of holiness. But the peculiarity of the present passage is that it gives special prominence to the spiritual phenomena of a certain interval of transition, which reality requires and Scripture never denies. The Apostle means that the Christian state is, at the best, in many respects no better than "the dawn."

The Church upon earth is only in the dawn of the day of its full redemption. That day will be perfect when Christ shall appear "without sin unto salvation"; when He shall come no longer bearing the burden of His cross, but bearing the burden of His glory and of His exceeding great rewards. Then will He consummate the sanctification of His saints, rendering the warfare between flesh and spirit for ever impossible; releasing them from the last vestige of infirmity, and uttering the final decree, "Be holy still." Now, in the dawn, we are dependent on the ceaseless ministry of that grace which still retains the basin and the towel to wash the disciples' feet; we are encompassed about with such infirmities as make the full glory of Christian perfection a state too high for time.

3. It is true that in comparison with their former heathenism and Judaism the Roman Christians were in the full day. The light which their Christianity was now affording them was indeed that of final truth, just as the beams of the natural dawn are truly incipient daylight. All the same, however, there is a point

of view in which the Christianity of the Church militant here on earth is only the dawn of a fuller and brighter revelation to follow. For Christ never professed to explain to the world all the perplexing mysteries of life. He professed to reveal and did reveal all that was necessary for our salvation, but He left many an important speculative question unsolved. For example, how we long to know more of the state of the departed and to understand the mystery of evil and of suffering; but, as it is not necessary for our salvation that we should know these things, Christ did not reveal them. He gave us as much light as was required, and such light as is destined to grow more and more unto the perfect day, but for the time being He withheld the noonday splendour and left us to trust in Him for the due supply of such light as should be convenient for us. And thus those Christians who had just been described by the Apostle as involved in darkness were now rightly declared by him to be, by their incorporation into Christ, not yet indeed surrounded by the full effulgence of day, but still enjoying the beams of a dawn, which would ere long increase into the noontide splendour.

Feeling the way,—and all the way uphill;
But on the open summit, calm and still,
The feet of Christ are planted; and they stand
In view of all the quiet land.

Feeling the way,—and though the way is dark,
The eyelids of the morning yet shall mark
Against the East the shining of His face,
At peace upon the lighted place.

Feeling the way,—and if the way is cold,
What matter?—since upon the fields of gold
His breath is melting; and the warm winds sing
While rocking summer days for Him.[1]

iii. The Day.

1. The First Advent answers to the "dawn," the Second answers to the "day." Here we must remember the vivid expectation of the Second Advent which prevailed in the primitive Church. After the rising from the dead, the Lord had not merely resumed His interrupted earthly existence, but

[1] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

had taken upon Him the spiritual body of the Resurrection, and had disappeared and re-appeared according to the mysterious laws which governed that new life. And thus, just as He had re-appeared after disappearing at Emmaus, so they expected Him to return after He vanished at the Ascension. Concerning the date of the final return no revelation had been given. The Son of Man was as one who had taken His journey into a far country! But the duration of His absence does not concern us here. St. Paul believed that He would return sooner or later. And then, with His advent, the glorious noon of revelation would be reached. Then we should know as we are known. Then we should no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. Then would "the day break, and the shadows flee away!" And so that was the glorious noon which the Apostle declared to be in store for those Roman disciples who had so recently passed from the night of heathenism into the wondrous dawn of Christianity.

¶ Nothing in nature is more beautiful or more symbolical of eager expectation than the dawn that proclaims, "The day is at hand": the day itself that fulfils its promise cannot surpass its beauty. Here the figure is, in a certain sense, insufficient: the day that we expect will be so glorious as to cause its early splendours to be forgotten. But the brightness is a great reality: the estate of Christ's watchers is one in which an enthusiastic hope may well predominate. To the company as such there is nothing but joy in the future: its present inheritance is a hope full of immortality that knows no night; and "in the pathway thereof there is no death." The individual Christian also is taught to enter into the common hope. To every believer in Christ the present life is the dawn of a perfect day.[1]

¶ Elsewhere this day is more specifically described as "That Day," as "the Last Day," as "the Day of God," and "the Day of the Lord," as "the Day of Christ," the "Day of Redemption," and "the Day of Judgment." All these expressions are significant, and carry with them meaning of great moment and solemn instruction.

2. The Christian Church is appealed to as exercising a firm faith in the gradual consummation of the present dawn into perfect day. These words are a remembrancer; reminding those early travellers of the great secret which they know,—the most

[1] W. B. Pope.

precious secret time has to disclose,—that the Lord is at hand, bringing with Him all, and more than all, their hope can conceive. The return of our Saviour,—or, rather, His coming; for that is the Scriptural word, as if His first appearance was but a transient visit—fills the entire New Testament with a glow that leaves no part dark, brightens into all but glory the dimness of the Church's present vexation, and already almost swallows up death in victory.

To "know the time" is to know this its greatest secret. But the Apostle uses here an expression which occurs nowhere else; one which, without overstraining it, yields a very important truth. The coming of Christ will be to His Church—to His mystical, spiritual people—the regular and peaceful consummation of a day already begun; the same light and no other, but raised into meridian glory. To the ungodly world a catastrophe, and to slumbering Christians a sore amazement, it will be to those who wait for His appearing what day is to the earthly traveller who waits for the morning. The elements of heaven are here; the dawn is the earnest as well as the pledge of the day; and all that will be needful for the redeeming of every pledge the Scriptures contain is the withdrawal of the veil, the appearing of the Sun in the heavens, the showing Himself once more to His people. One of the most impressive, and also the most common, notes of the Christian community is this, that they "wait for his Son from heaven."

> Through love to light! Oh, wonderful the way
> That leads from darkness to the perfect day!
> From darkness and from sorrow of the night
> To morning that comes singing o'er the sea.
> Through love to light! through light, O God, to Thee,
> Who art the love of love, the eternal light of light![1]

II.

Preparation for the Day.

"Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

1. The Apostle uses the expectation of Christ's coming as an argument for wakefulness and watchfulness. "It is high time

[1] Richard Watson Gilder.

to awake out of sleep." "They that sleep, sleep in the night," but "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." Awake then ye slumbering and torpid souls; up and be doing! It is not the sinner only that needs thus to be aroused, but the saint also. The Christian ought to be characterized by liveliness, but he is very apt to let torpor get the better of him. He ought not to sleep as do others, but to watch and be sober, giving all diligence to make his calling and election sure.

¶ It is marvellous to consider the unanimity of mankind, outside Christianity altogether, in believing that they are, within limits, responsible beings, and that the results of life will follow them beyond the grave. Even many backward and savage races believe that the Being they worship is also a Moral Governor, and will, at the last, be their Judge. The ancient Egyptian thought that, after death, the soul was weighed in the balance, in the presence of the gods, against the image of the goddess of truth. Therefore, the religious texts were full of such sentences as, "Mind thee of the day when thou, too, shalt start for the land where one goeth to return not thence. Good for thee will have been a good life. Therefore, be just, and hate iniquity; for he who loves what is right shall triumph."[1]

2. Because the night is far spent and the day is at hand, we are bidden to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light. The exhortation, though in two parts, is one and the same. The Apostle gives both its negative and its positive side. The two acts are simultaneous, the one cannot effectually take place without the other; there is no casting off the works of darkness without putting on the armour of light, or putting on the armour of light without casting off the works of darkness. Satan is effectually cast out, and kept out, only by Christ entering in and occupying the heart. Sanctification is a positive as well as a negative process. It is at once the mortification of sin and the cultivation of holiness.

i. The Works of Darkness.

1. What are the "works of darkness"? Evidently such works as men commonly choose to do in darkness, *i.e.* wicked works For as our Lord says in another place, "Every one that doeth

[1] J. A. MacCulloch.

evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

St. Paul enumerates these works in three classes. First, indulgence in sensual acts; secondly, indulgence in unholy thoughts and desires; lastly, indulgence in anything that is not perfectly loving and lovely.

Now among Christians there are presumably few who would be guilty of indulging in sins of the first and second classes, but many are prone to anger and jealousy, pride and selfishness, malice and uncharitableness, strife and hypocrisy in the sight of God, equally with drunkenness, gluttony, and lust.

¶ The sins of darkness are followed by a retribution in kind, if the works of darkness are not cast off. Dante represents those who on earth were guilty of the sin of envy as losing their eyesight in Purgatory and condemned to pass their time in darkness.

In vilest haircloth were they dressed,
Each 'gainst his neighbour's shoulder pressed,
  And all alike reclined
  Against the bank behind.
So, where the sightless beggars stand
At the church doors and alms demand,
  And one his head has dropped,
  Against his fellow propped;
Then others feel compassion there,
Not only for the words they hear
  But for the yearning face
  That pleads no less for grace.
There of the sunlight none partake:
So, in the place whereof I spake,
  The precious light of Heaven
  Ne'er to those shades is given.
A thread of steel their eyelids all
Were pierced and stitched about withal
  Like to the merlin wild,
  That may not else be stilled.
Me seemed to do them wrong, as I
Unseen, yet seeing, passed them by.[1]

2. Such works as befit the kingdom of darkness are represented as being "cast off," like the uncomely garments of the

[1] Dante, *Purg.* xiii. 58–74, tr. by Dr. Shadwell.

night, for the bright armour which befits the Christian soldier as a member of the kingdom of light. The conception of the passage is classical and Roman, borrowed from the camp. Through the night the soldiery, divested of their armour, have abandoned themselves to revelry and carouse, and, as the small hours have reigned, have sunk into a deep sleep; but, lo, the ringing bugle note is announcing the herald streaks of dawn, and summoning the troops hastily to put off the dress and works of darkness, and to assume their armour free from rust and stain.

¶ What would you wish to be found doing when Christ comes in? Drinking, and rioting, and making merry? Practising unclean ways, and gazing and longing after evil things? Striving and quarrelling and grudging against one another? Surely not: you would not wish to be so found of Him; nor yet that, coming suddenly, He should find you sleeping. Rather you would desire that He may find you kneeling on your knees, in fervent prayer, confessing your many sins; or waiting on some of those whom He calls His brethren, busy about some work of mercy; or patiently enduring His chastisements; or, at least, honestly and religiously going on with the task which His Providence orders for you. This is how we would wish to be found. Let us not only wish, but pray and strive, and by His grace we shall be found so doing indeed.[1]

The longing for ignoble things;
  The strife for triumph more than truth;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
  Irreverence for the dreams of youth;

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds,
  That have their root in thoughts of ill;
Whatever hinders or impedes
  The action of the nobler will;—

All these must first be trampled down
  Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
  The right of eminent domain.

Standing on what too long we bore
  With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
We may discern—unseen before—
  A path to higher destinies.

[1] J. Keble.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past,
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.[1]

ii. The Armour of Light.

1. "Put on the armour of light." What a fine battle-cry this is! It comes, too, from the lips of the finest fighter the world has ever seen, the man who could stand up and say to God and all ages, "I have fought the good fight." Life was a battle to him, a fight for his very soul, a stern unceasing conflict. And so it is with most of us. But let us remember how all the grand heroes of war have borne the brunt without murmuring. Do not complain of the conditions. They are not always fair; we fight an unseen foe who will not come out into the open. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood"; it would be a comparatively simple thing if that were all. But we wrestle against "the wiles of the devil, against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." To such a battle are we called.

¶ A young officer, for the first time under fire, felt that strange demand that is made upon a man's courage when the bullets fly around him, and he sees men fall and die at his side. He was on the point of breaking down. It seemed impossible for him to go on, and for a moment he faltered, visibly irresolute. An older officer saw what was happening, and he just put his hand upon the lad's shoulder. "Oh, no!" he said, pointing onward, "there's your way, you know"; and the young fellow's career was saved. So what we all want, and what we want most, is that the Master should come over and again lay His hands upon us and tell us to be as men that wait for their Lord, whom when He cometh He shall find watching. What a splendid figure that is! The sentinel at his post, watching in the dim morning, peering through the haze for the rising of the sun.[2]

2. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul explains more fully what he means by the armour of the soldiers of Christ. There he speaks of it as being the armour of truth, of righteousness, of faith. But here, when he speaks of the armour of light

[1] Longfellow, *Ladder of St. Augustine.*
[2] W. A. L. Taylor.

he goes a step further; he means that men should wear this armour openly, so that others may see that they are Christ's soldiers; that they should not wear it, as in olden days men sometimes wore a coat of mail, hidden away under their tunics.

¶ You know the story narrated in the Old Testament about Ahab. On going out to battle, he disguised himself, and induced Jehoshaphat to wear his armour, because he was afraid that if he wore it himself he would be a marked man. In his case, you know, the disguise was of no avail. Ahab, disguised though he was, was killed. The other king, the nobler man, escaped. Well, just in the same way I think some of us try to live as Christians "in disguise." Faith, hope, love—these are the three great words which Christianity has given to the world; and yet there are some who try to hide away, as much as ever they can, their deepest faiths, their highest hopes, their purest loves. When St. Paul tells us that we should put on the "armour of light," he means that we should so live that others shall see at once that we mean to live the strong true life of a soldier of Christ.[1]

If life is always a warfare
  Between the right and the wrong,
And good is fighting with evil
  For ages and æons long—

Fighting with eager cohorts,
  With banners pierced and torn,
Shining with sudden splendour,
  Wet with the dew of morn;

If all the forces of heaven,
  And all the forces of sin,
Are met in the infinite struggle
  The souls of the world to win;

If God's is the awful battle
  Where the darkling legions ride—
Hasten to sword and to saddle!
  Lord, let me fight on Thy side!

[1] F. de W. Lushington.

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None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died, and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. —Rom. xiv. 7-9.

1. THIS text is interpreted for us by the section of the Epistle to the Romans in which it is found. That section is devoted to the elucidation of the principles by which the early Christians were to be guided as to their observance or non-observance of particular festival days, and as to their abstinence or non-abstinence from certain kinds of meats and drinks. To understand the matter fully we must have a clear perception of the difficulty with which the Apostle was seeking to deal.

Living as they were in the midst of paganism, the Gentile Christians were frequently invited to feasts at which meat was served which had been offered to an idol. Some partook of it without any hesitation, believing, as St. Paul himself did, that an idol was nothing in the world and that nothing was unclean of itself. Others, having less enlightened consciences, refused to touch it, believing that if they did eat it they would be guilty of countenancing idolatry. The Jewish converts, again, were divided on the question of the observance of their national feasts. Some of them maintained their old habits in the matter of those Mosaic appointments, and others contented themselves with the simple keeping of the Lord's Day. All of them relied upon the sacrifice of Christ for justification, and therefore are to be carefully distinguished from those against whom the Epistle to the Galatians was written, and who insisted on circumcision as essential to salvation. No vital principle was at stake in this instance. The error of the scrupulous was that of asceticism,

not that of legalism; and so the Apostle here counsels mutual forbearance. He condemns everything like intolerance and recrimination. Those who had attained to such breadth of view that they felt no difficulty about eating anything that was set before them, were not to arrogate to themselves superiority over those who felt no such liberty; and on the other hand, those whose consciences would not allow them to partake of every sort of food were not to condemn such as had no scruples on the matter. The Jewish believer who kept all the festivals of his nation was not to look upon himself as better than he who observed only the Christian festival of the first day of the week; and neither were they whose strength of mind had raised them above such things to despise those who still considered that they were important. There was to be an agreement between them to differ in love; and if in any case the exercise of his undoubted liberty by one should seriously imperil the spiritual welfare of another by leading him to commit sin, then that liberty was to be cheerfully sacrificed in order that a brother should not be destroyed, for "the kingdom of God" was not a thing of "meats and drinks," but of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Now the truth which has been affirmed in regard to the use of food, and observance or non-observance of days, is here based on a large truth of which it is a part. The whole life of the Christian belongs not to himself, but to his Lord. "None of us liveth to himself," means that no Christian is his own end in life; what is always present to his mind, as the rule of his conduct, is the will and the interest of his Lord. The same holds of his dying. He does not choose either the time or the mode of it, like a Roman Stoic, to please himself. He dies when the Lord will, as the Lord will, and even by his death glorifies God. In ver. 14 ff. St. Paul comes to speak of the influence of conduct upon others; but here there is no such thing in view; the prominence given to "the Lord," three times named in ver. 8, shows that the one truth present to his mind is the all-determining significance, for Christian conduct, of the relation to Christ. This (ideally) determines everything, alike in life and in death; and all that is determined by it is right.

The following verses indicate that St. Paul has at heart the truth that we live for ever related to one another, but he reaches

it through the greater, deeper, antecedent truth of our relation to the Lord. The Christian is related to his brother-Christian through Christ, not to Christ through his brother, or through the common organism in which the brethren are "each other's limbs." "To the Lord" with absolute directness, with a perfect and wonderful immediateness, each individual Christian is first related. His life and death are "to others," but through Him. The Master's claim is eternally first; for it is based directly upon the redeeming work in which He bought us for Himself.

I.

In Life.

"None of us liveth to himself . . . we live unto the Lord."

1. What is meant by this strange phraseology translated "unto" or "to"? We live "unto" the Lord. It seems to impart at once to the phrase an air of unfamiliarity, if not of actual unreality. Shall we try to understand this? The right and full understanding of it, indeed, would make any one a master of St. Paul's philosophy, but some understanding of it we may all win.

We have very close relations with one another. Each one of us has duties to his friends, his society, his country. No one saw more clearly than St. Paul that religion was bound to take all these duties into account, to illuminate and sanctify them. Christ's religion is above all others the religion of humanity. And on this aspect of religious duty—our duty to one another, and to the society of which we form a part—St. Paul spoke and wrote often and urgently. These duties are so exhaustive in their sphere, so far-reaching, so varied, that they make almost a religion of themselves.

But St. Paul knew very well that the religion which is based only on men's relations to one another would be a very imperfect one. There is a third element in religion which must never be absent, and that is God. If we wish to grasp the significance of religion we must keep in view the thought of God, the thought of the world, and the thought of our own individual soul, and

assign to each its proper place. If we leave out the thought of the world we may sink into a morbid, unpractical life of superstition and seclusion; if we leave out the thought of God we shall certainly fall into a somewhat fashionable philosophy, which is, however, one-sided, incomplete, not profound or final.

Now St. Paul, by this word "unto"—live "unto" the Lord—embodies the relation between these three great elements; not consciously, but all the more instructively because the expression arose unconsciously out of his natural and habitual modes of thought. "Live," he says (and the context shows that he is speaking of the complicated life in a society), "live, and perform all your duties to society and to one another; and the way to do so is to live unto the Lord." St. Paul might tell us to live with men, for men, by men; but it is impossible that St. Paul should tell us to live unto men. Here comes in the third element. We are to live with men, for men, but with our thoughts reaching out unto God. These real personal relations between our individual soul and God are not to be sacrificed to our duties to one another; nay, more; we cannot live as St. Paul bids us live until we live unto God, with our eyes, and thoughts, and prayers turned to Him.

2. The "Lord" here spoken of is at once Christ and God. This is manifest from the ninth verse, where Christ is identified with the "Lord of both the dead and the living"; from the tenth verse, where He is declared to be the supreme Judge of the world; and from the eleventh, where the Apostle, to establish that title, directly applies to Christ the solemn declaration of the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah,—"I am God, and there is none else. Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." The God, then, to whom we must make this utter and unreserved surrender of the heart, is the God who was revealed in Christ Jesus, and who, by the mystery of the Incarnation, has for ever united in Himself the Divine and human natures, and has consecrated the one by the other. Unto Him, as Christians, we are called upon to live; He who is the principle of our spiritual life is also made the object of it; as the vapours of the ocean supply the rivers that return into the ocean itself.

¶ I quite appreciate your difficulty in accepting the term "the

Lordship of Christ," and I would not for a moment assert that "to know God as Spirit" may not be a more advanced perception or apprehension. But the Personality of the term "Lord" helps me; the Lord Jesus is my Personal God, and for the awakening, sustaining, and developing of my affections I seem to need that "individualized" presentation of Deity. "Spirit" is too abstract at present for me. I find in the apprehension of God, which "the Lord" represents to me, the Comforter or Helper. I quite agree with you that "Lord" seems an individualized word, and gives the thought of limitations, while "Spirit" is free and diffused; but do we not, through the knowledge of the individualized "Lord," get really to the knowledge of "Spirit" universal and diffused?[1]

3. Let us consider, then, how a real, living obedience to the command to live "unto the Lord" would affect our lives here, in our present society.

(1) To live means with us all, to work. Work in one form or another occupies a large part of our lives. Would it not make a great difference to any man if he felt that all his work was done "unto the Lord," not unto men? It would not so much increase his diligence, but it would make it uniform, trustworthy; he would not be influenced so much by lower and temporary motives; vanity would have no place; consciously superficial work would be impossible, the work being done for the eye of the Master in heaven.

(2) And what dignity it adds to labour. Much the greatest part of any man's work is a sort of drudgery, or what in some moments of weariness we are tempted to call so. Certainly much is monotonous, almost mechanical, attention to endless details. We are apt to grow impatient of this, to think that we have a soul above such petty details, to do our work, whatever it may be, badly and superficially, and to find some excuse for ourselves in the triviality of the things we neglect. But the thought that we are living "unto the Lord," with our eyes on Him, and His on us, dignifies all the most trivial details of duty, and removes impatience. We are working under our Master's eye; and no work that He gives us is petty or uninteresting.

¶ All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as

[1] R. W. Corbet, *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day*, 208.

the Earth, has its summits in Heaven. Sweat of the brow; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms,—up to that "Agony of bloody sweat," which all men have called divine! O brother, if this is not "worship," then I say, the more pity for worship; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; see thy fellow-Workmen there, in God's Eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving; sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind.[1]

They said, "The carpenter's son." To me,
No dearer thing in the Book I see,
For He must have risen with the light,
And patiently toiled until the night.
He too was weary when evening came,
For well He knoweth our mortal frame,
And He remembers the weight of dust,
So His frail children may sing and trust.

We often toil till our eyes grow dim,
Yet our hearts faint not because of Him.
The workers are striving everywhere,
Some with a pitiful load of care;
Many in peril upon the sea,
Or deep in the mine's dark mystery,
While mothers nor day nor night can rest;
I fancy the Master loves them best.

For many a little head has lain
On the heart pierced by redemption's pain.
He was so tender with fragile things,
He saw the sparrow with broken wings.
His mother, loveliest woman born,
Had humble tasks in her home each morn,
And He thought of her the cross above,
So burdened woman must have His love.

For labour, the common lot of man,
Is part of a kind Creator's plan,
And he is a king whose brow is wet
With the pearl-gemmed crown of honest sweat.

[1] Carlyle, *Past and Present*, ch. xii.

Some glorious day, this understood,
All toilers will be a brotherhood.
With brain or hand the purpose is one,
And the master workman, God's own Son.

4. Then there is another consequence of the thought that we are living "unto the Lord," an instantaneous and most important consequence. If we can bring the thought of God as a factor into our relations with the world, it will prevent us, as nothing else will, from making, more or less consciously, our own happiness our aim. Now if we aim at happiness, a thousand things occur to disappoint us; either we do not get what we want, or, quite as often, we get what we want and then do not enjoy it; it is different from what we expected, or there comes with it a little bitter sting of conscience which destroys all the pleasure. But if in our life and work we think of God, if we do our work "unto the Lord," we escape the personal element in disappointment; our failures will chasten us without making us sullen or morose. For such a thought leaves no room for vanity, from which most of our disappointments spring. Such a thought transplants us into a region above vanity.

Though now thou hast failed and art fallen, despair not because of defeat,
Though lost for a while be thy heaven and weary of earth be thy feet,
For all will be beauty about thee hereafter through sorrowful years,
And lovely the dews for thy chilling, and ruby thy heart-drip of tears.

The eyes that had gazed from afar on a beauty that blinded the eyes,
Shall call forth its image for ever, its shadow in alien skies.
The heart that had striven to beat in the heart of the Mighty too soon
Shall still of that beating remember some errant and faltering tune.

For thou hast but fallen to gather the last of the secrets of power;
The beauty that breathes in thy spirit shall shape of thy sorrow a flower.

The pale bud of pity shall open the bloom of its tenderest rays,
The heart of whose shining is bright with the light of the
Ancient of Days.[1]

5. And thus we come back to the first part of the text: "None of us liveth unto himself." For a man cannot live unto the Lord, and live to himself. There will be no room for selfishness in a life that is really devoted to the Lord. "None of us liveth to himself"—this alone is a sublime text for the socialist. But it was not the text of St. Paul, and we only need to turn over the pages of experience to find out where it breaks down. If we make the right beginning and remember that we live unto the Lord, an unselfish attitude to our fellow-men will follow as a natural consequence. "To love is the perfect of the verb to live."

¶ Few men in his generation sought to live so much for Christ and his people as did Thomas Guthrie, the Scottish pulpit orator and philanthropist, and the secret of all was that he had learned at the foot of the cross to sacrifice self and to love all for whom the Master died. I have heard him often, and always with delight, but never, I think, with such quivering emotion tingling through my frame, as when, at the close of a glowing appeal for his ragged children, he repeated with the deepest fervour, these lines, which were peculiarly appropriate on lips like his—

I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true;
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit, too;
For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrongs that need resistance,
For the future in the distance,
For the good that I can do.

That was his motto, because he had learned the meaning of the love of Christ to his own soul.[2]

II.

In Death.

"And none dieth to himself . . . we die unto the Lord."

1. "None dieth to himself." The expression is striking, but it is practically meaningless if separated from the rest of the passage.

[1] A. E., *The Divine Vision*, 78. [2] W. M. Taylor.

It is the thought which follows that we must emphasize. *We die unto the Lord.* So then, it results that if we live to the Lord and die to the Lord we are eternally the Lord's. Once grasp that thought firmly, and we shall hold a weapon strong to disarm the grim fear of death.

¶ Death is the withdrawal of all human support from around the soul, of its vesture and home, of the very body which is its second self, that it may be alone with Christ, and feel Him to be enough for it, more to it than any created thing. He invites the soul and constrains it to put all its confidence into that last act of surrender; to cast itself, bare of every aid but His, into the mysterious infinite, feeling that underneath it are the everlasting arms. For a man to learn this perfect confidence in Christ, he must die.[1]

¶ Once when I was visiting a dear child whose death-bed was a very happy one, she told me she had been dreaming that she was in the act of departing, and she felt not the slightest alarm. It reminded her of a day long previously, when she was being bathed in the sea, and her big brother suddenly caught her up and carried her out far beyond her depth. It gave her only a sensation of delight, for she knew she was safe in his arms.[2]

2. The Apostle four times over in this short paragraph makes mention of death, and of the dead. "None of us dieth to himself"; "whether we die, we die unto the Lord"; "whether we die, we are the Lord's"; "that he might be Lord of the dead." And this last sentence, with its mention not of the dying but of the dead, reminds us that the reference in them all is to the Christian's relation to his Lord, not only in the hour of death, but in the state after death; it is not only that Jesus Christ, as the slain One risen, is absolute Disposer of the time and manner of our dying; it is not only that when our death comes we are to accept it as an opportunity for the "glorifying of God" (John xxi. 19; Phil. i. 20) in the sight and in the memory of those who know of it. It is that when we have "passed through death," and come out upon the other side,

> When we enter yonder regions,
> When we touch the sacred shore,

our relation to the slain One risen, to Him who, as such, "hath the keys of death and of Hades," is perfectly continuous and the

[1] John Ker. [2] J. Gibson.

same. He is our absolute Master, there as well as here. And we, by consequence and correlation, are vassals, servants, bondservants to Him, there as well as here.

> For doubt not but that in the worlds above
> There must be other offices of love;
> That other tasks and ministries there are,
> Since it is written that His servants there
> Shall serve Him still.[1]

3. "Eternally the Lord's." Let us welcome the assurance from His own teaching. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"—wherever that mysterious spot may be in space, at least somewhere where He is living a continuous life. The death of Jesus Christ is no ceasing, no ending of His personal existence. This is as clear as anything can be. Put to death in the flesh, He was quickened in the Spirit, and He went in that Spirit and preached to the spirits in prison. Death was to Him no ending of existence; it was an incident in the endless life; not an incident that came to Him as other incidents had come and were to come, of His Father's will, and in the time of His Father's ordaining. It has never touched for a single moment the continuity of His personal existence. And as with Him, so with us. He died, He rose, He revived in order that He might make manifest to us what our death is. Death, then, to us as to Him, does not touch personal existence at all. Whether we live we live unto the Lord; whether we die we die unto the Lord; living or dying, we are the Lord's. It is not surviving death. Death is only the inevitable incident that comes to us in a life which is of endless continuance.

> Death is another life. We bow our heads,
> At going out, we think, and enter straight
> Another golden chamber of the King's,
> Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.[2]

III.

The Lord's.

"Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. *For to this end* Christ died, and lived again, that He might be Lord of

[1] R. C. Trench. [2] P. J. Bailey, *Festus*.

both the dead and the living." In these words, as so often in general statements of this kind in St. Paul, there seems to be a universal reference, and a particular one also. For while it is obvious that the great assertion of the text has a sense in which it is true of the whole race of man, in which every man, whatever he may be doing or suffering, is Christ's, it is equally obvious that there is also another sense, and that the only blessed and full one, in which they and they alone are His who are consciously united to Him in His death unto sin and His life unto righteousness; who shall reign and walk with Him in light, where He is in the glory of the Father.

1. Let us take first the general fact announced in the words: "To this end Christ died, and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." The Apostle is speaking of the duty of all Christians to judge one another charitably, and grounding it on this fact that it is not to himself, but to the Lord, that every Christian man lives and dies and performs all his actions. We therefore, in judging another, are judging the servant of a far higher master, to whom, and to whom alone, he standeth or falleth. And the proof of this is the fact that we are not our own. And how is it that we are not our own? It is because with His most precious blood, shed in our humanity, Christ purchased us to Himself—purchased, that is to say, this universal race of man, to be His in a peculiar manner, in which it was not and could not be His without the shedding of that blood, and the triumph which He achieved through death. Moreover, the Apostle declares that to become possessor and Lord of both the dead and the living was the very object and end which the Son of God set before Himself in His sufferings and His triumphs.

(1) The death of Christ is usually and rightly looked upon as the great atonement for our sin—for the sin of the world. But in so regarding it, men not only stop here when they should go very much further, but they do not understand even this much aright. As long as they have an idea of Christ the Son of God, as merely one living man substituted for other men in God's sight as their atonement, they can give no account whatever of the fact that by so doing He intended to become Lord of our nature.

¶ If A pays a penalty on behalf of B, there may exist a claim of gratitude, but there results no fact of lordship or ownership whatever. And it is characteristic enough that those who regard the death of our Lord as the mere substitution of one person for another, commonly forget, or even deny, the fact of His universal lordship and headship over our race. Here is one of the reasons why evangelical preaching often fails to work social changes and renew men's souls. Preachers allow to pass out of sight the one truth of God, that He who was stricken thus as our substitute, was not merely a personal man, but the personal Son of God with our whole nature upon Him; bearing in His own Divine Person our flesh, the flesh of all the many thousand millions of mankind, as certainly and as actually as Adam bore us all in himself when he stood alone in God's world.[1]

(2) Now in order that Christ may be Head and King of the race, it is not necessary that we should first believe it. We are not the measure of this fact; it exists irrespective of us and our belief; it is God's eternal truth; it is God's One eternal truth, by which He will save the world. But when we apprehend this truth that Christ *is* our Head and King, that He lives in us and through us, that His death is our death, His victory our victory, His crown our crown, His spirit our spirit—then, and not till then, can we lift up ourselves, and shake off the dust of death, and stand up in God's sight pardoned and justified men, with God's work before us and God's help to do it with.

¶ Christ is the universal head, and man's belief is just the lighting up of this fact in reference to the individual man, and making it to be to him *the fact* of his own individual life. Well then, you say, you come to faith after all. Come to faith? Yes, certainly. Do you suppose this wonderful being of ours, body animated by life and lighted by spirit, can be rescued, can be saved, can be glorified, without and in the abeyance of its higher powers? If you are to benefit the body by medicine, must not the body take it in? If you are to turn a man's course for good, must you not persuade him? And if this inclusion in Christ, this fact and potentiality of God which *He* has brought about in the mystery of redemption, is in its turn to bring about in you holiness, and joy, and fruit for God, and future glory, do you suppose it can do so without your apprehending it, without your applying it as a reality to your whole life and thoughts?

[1] Dean Alford.

Of course we come to faith, and always must come to faith, in every spiritual matter.[1]

2. Now we come to the more proper and more close application of the words—that in which the terms "we" and "us" are referred to those who have apprehended, who do feel, who are living in, and making their own, this glorious truth. And the difference between them and others is that they are consciously realizing to its fullest extent the fact of Christ's Lordship. They are one with Christ. He is their King, as He is King of all, but they are His willing and devoted bondmen.

¶ Speaking of Phillips Brooks in early manhood, his biographer says: To be true to himself, to renounce nothing which he knew to be good and yet bring all things captive to the obedience of Christ, was the problem before him. He hesitated long before he could believe that such a solution was possible. His heart was with this rich attractive world of human life, in the multiplicity and wealth of its illustrations, until it was revealed to him that it assumed a richer but a holier aspect when seen in the light of God. But to this end, he must submit his will to the Divine will in the spirit of absolute obedience. Here the struggle was deep and prolonged. It was a moral struggle mainly, not primarily intellectual or emotional. He feared that he should lose something in sacrificing his own will to God's will. How the gulf was bridged he could not tell. He wrote down as one of the first of the texts on which he should preach, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," with the comment that "willingness is the first Christian step." Thus the conversion of Phillips Brooks becomes a representative process of his age. So far as the age has been great, through science or through literature, its greatness passed into his soul. The weakness of his age, its sentimentalism, its fatalism, he overcame in himself when he made the absolute surrender of his will to God. All that he had hitherto loved and cherished as the highest, instead of being lost, was given back to him in fuller measure. To the standard he had now raised there rallied great convictions and blessed experiences, the sense of the unity of life, the harmony of the whole creation, the consciousness of joy in being alive, the conviction that heaven is the goal of earth.[2]

3. Now it follows with every man who thus apprehends the Gospel of Christ and Christ Himself, that his life and thoughts

[1] **Dean Alford.** [2] ***Phillips Brooks*, 82.**

must be changed and purified and sanctified by Christ's Spirit For if I, with my inner man, have laid hold on this truth as my truth of life, that Christ is my Lord and Head, that it is Christ who lives in me, not I myself merely, and that I am the partaker of Christ's victory and Christ's glory, just so far as His holy and sin-hating and godly life is carried on and carried out in me, is it not totally impossible that I should live in sin or to sin?

¶ Writing to the Corinthian Christians St. Paul does not endeavour to *persuade* them into the belief that they are living a new life in Christ; he speaks of it in the simplest language of fact—"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 4–7). This is the strain in which men write to their friends about assured facts; thus would a man express thankfulness for his friend's health or his prosperity, or the advancement of his children, or any of those matters of fact which admit least doubt, and require least argument. More than one of the apologists of Christianity, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, appeal to the existence of conspicuous Christian virtues amongst them, which even their enemies are expected to admit. Their patience of wrong and of suffering, their strict morality, their unselfishness, their mutual love, contrasted so strongly with the tone of pagan society, that they were like water-springs in a dry and barren ground. "Christ," says Augustine, "appeared to the men of an old and expiring world, that whilst all around them was fading away, they might receive through Him a new life and youth." It was the evidence of good works, rather than of miracles, that attracted new inquirers to the Christian ranks, even whilst persecutions were thinning them. Young lads and tender women, common workmen and slaves, showed that a new spring moved all their actions; and those who came into contact with them, if they had in their hearts any germ of good at all, must have felt the influence of this moral superiority. And can we find any other solution of this change than the simplest of all, that Christ was keeping His promise of being ever with His disciples? It was God who wrought in them; it was the promised Spirit of God who guided them; it was the Lord of the dead and the living who was sitting at the right hand of God, and helping and communing with those whom the Father had given Him.[1]

[1] Archbishop Thomson.

They whose hearts are whole and strong,
Loving holiness,
Living clean from soil of wrong,
Wearing truth's white dress,—
They unto no far-off height
Wearily need climb;
Heaven to them is close in sight
From these shores of time.

Only the anointed eye
Sees in common things,—
Gleam of wave, and tint of sky,—
Heavenly blossomings.
To the hearts where light has birth
Nothing can be drear;
Budding through the bloom of earth,
Heaven is always near.[1]

4. It was precisely this that was in St. Paul's view when he affirmed that "none of us liveth to himself," and that "none dieth to himself." He was not speaking of any persons who had attained to this perfection, but of the law of spiritual life under which we all have passed. God is our Law; Christ is our Rule; and while we are no longer free to follow inclinations that would draw us out of accord with Christ's rule, we are liberated from all lower authority. God's service is then perfect freedom; we are no longer free to live to ourselves, because our will has passed into a higher life. How can he, says St. Paul, who is dead to sin, live any longer therein? We are determined, even as God is determined, by the highest life that is in us. And in the Apostle's words,—for we might fear to use such words from ourselves—we become joint rulers with God as we become His servants from our hearts. We rule through willing submission: accord with the Highest is command over all that is lower than He. We obey natural law, and it obeys us; we obey the laws of labour, and it yields us its returns; we obey God, and He is the strength of our souls and our portion for evermore. This is the great law of life which delivers us from ourselves and our own blindness, so that, living or dying, life and death are freed from the colours of earthly

[1] Lucy Larcom.

accident, and centred in God. This is the only true liberty, to know that we are not our own masters.

¶ "We are the Lord's," and they amongst whom we work are the Lord's. Miserable some of them are and disappointing, and unsatisfactory; but they are the Lord's. There are some who repel us, and make us feel inclined to turn away in despair, squalid and half-human as they seem to be; but they are the Lord's. Living or dead, wretched and mean though they be, they belong to Him. He has not finished with them yet. "It doth not yet appear what they shall be"; but it will help us to value the souls of our fellow-men, and to discover something better than the sordid and the unlovely, if we remember that Christ Jesus is their Lord. There are forces at work to frustrate His designs, and He sends us forth to grapple with "the wrongs that need resistance" and to help "the cause that lacks assistance." In all social service, Jesus works with His disciples, for all men are His.[1]

Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live![2]

[1] J. S. Corlett. [2] Wordsworth, "Ode to Duty."

Our Accountability.

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Our Accountability.

So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.—Rom. xiv. 12.

1. When St. Paul says that "each one of us shall give account of himself to God," he makes one of the most solemn statements that are to be found even in his Epistles. He is led into making it quite incidentally. He wants to lay down a principle, which would check the rash judgments that were common among Christians at Rome in his day regarding the private religious observances of their Christian neighbours. Some of the Roman Christians, it seems, were vegetarians; others ate anything that came in their way. Some of them observed private anniversaries; to others all days were pretty much alike. As yet the Church had not laid down any rule about these matters for Christians; and no individual Christian might challenge another's liberty or judge another's conduct. "Why," asks the Apostle, "dost thou judge thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Here is a solemn truth, which must have at once lifted the thoughts of the Apostle's Roman readers above the controversies in which they were engaged, into a higher and serener atmosphere. Whatever food they ate or did not eat, whatever days they did or did not observe, one thing was certain—they would have to give an account of the act or the omission, as of everything else in their lives. "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

2. The words are more than an assurance that there will be a Day of Judgment, and that at that Day of Judgment each one of us must be present. The Apostle seems to be suggesting that example, education, surroundings of life, holding the principles

and opinions we do, and being what we are, must be taken into consideration before an accurate judgment can be arrived at. He, therefore, warns us to judge ourselves, about whom we may know everything, and to refrain from judging others about whom our knowledge must be imperfect. "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."

The text tells us four things about our Accountability:—

I. It is Universal. "*Each one* of us."
II. It is Inevitable. "Each one of us *shall give.*"
III. It is Personal. "Account *of himself.*"
IV. It is Supreme. "*To God.*"

I.

It is Universal.

"*Each one of us* shall give account."

There will come a judgment for all classes of persons, there will be a judgment for the strong brother who with his knowledge of Christian liberty went perhaps further than he ought to have gone. He judged himself to be right in the matter, but he must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ about it. There will also be a judgment for the weak brother. He who was so scrupulous and precise ought not to be censuring the other man who felt free in his conscience, for he will himself stand before the judgment-seat of God. No elevation in piety will exclude us from that last solemn test, and no weakness will serve as an excuse. What a motley throng will gather at that assize, of all nations and peoples and tongues! Kings and princes will be there to give in their weighty account, and senators and judges to answer to their Judge; and then the multitude of the poor and needy, and those that live neglecting God, and forgetful of their souls,—they must all be there. It is a universal judgment.

1. Peer and peasant must give account. You may argue, "It cannot be a great matter to me what is said in the Bible

about the day of account; I am but a poor man, and have but few things committed to my care; I have neither houses nor lands, nor riches, nor worldly goods; I have no great talents to misuse; no opportunities of doing good to neglect; why, then, should I be afraid of the final reckoning? Surely the just God will not look for a harvest where He has sown no seed. Surely He will not require at my hands an account like that which may well be asked of the wealthy and the great." The argument is out of place and useless. Poor, humble, obscure as you are, you must give account.

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains and the mighty men," must see the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne. The Apostle Paul himself is "one of us." Of all men the manliest, among philosophers claiming recognition beyond the multitude, of rhetoricians not the least, in grand revelation the peer of every apostle and of all seers, in character most strong, most confiding, pure, and powerful—the Apostle Paul, standing far above the people in that which constitutes true stature, yet confesses himself to be one of us—"Each one of us."

¶ Louis XV. had always the kingliest abhorrence of Death. . . . He would not suffer Death to be spoken of; avoided the sight of churchyards, funereal monuments, and whatsoever could bring it to mind. It is the resource of the Ostrich; who, hard hunted, sticks his foolish head in the ground, and would fain forget that his foolish unseeing body is not unseen too. Or sometimes, with a spasmodic antagonism, significant of the same thing, and of more, he *would* go; or stopping his court carriages, would send into churchyards, and ask "how many new graves there were to-day," though it gave his poor Pompadour the disagreeablest qualms. We can figure the thought of Louis that day, when, all royally caparisoned for hunting, he met at some sudden turning in the Wood of Senart, a ragged peasant with a coffin: "For whom?"—It was for a poor brother slave, whom Majesty had sometimes noticed slaving in those quarters. "What did he die of?"—"Of hunger":—the King gave his steed the spur. But figure his thought, when Death is now clutching at his own heart-strings; unlooked for, inexorable! Yes, poor Louis, Death has found thee. No palace walls or life-guards, gorgeous tapestries or gilt buckram of stiffest ceremonial could keep him out; but he is here, here at thy very life-breath, and will extinguish

it. Thou whose whole existence hitherto was a chimera and scenic show, at length becomest a reality; sumptuous Versailles bursts asunder, like a dream, into void Immensity; Time is done, and all the scaffolding of Time falls wrecked with hideous clangour round thy soul; the pale Kingdoms yawn open; there must thou enter, naked, all unking'd, and await what is appointed thee!

And yet let no meanest man lay flattering unction to his soul. Louis was a Ruler; but art not thou also one? His wide France, look at it from the Fixed Stars (themselves not yet Infinitude), is no wider than thy narrow brickfield, where thou too didst faithfully, or didst unfaithfully.[1]

2. The religious and irreligious alike must give account. As Christians we must give account. "The lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (Matt. xxv. 19). They have been justified by faith. They have been united to their glorious Head. They "shall be saved" (1 Cor. iii 15), whatever be the fate of their "work." But what will their Lord say of their work? What have they done for Him, in labour, in witness, and above all in *character*? He will tell them what He thinks. He will be infinitely kind; but He will not flatter.

The irreligious, the careless, and inconsiderate, must give account—those who say to themselves "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Too many go on always, nearly all do so at times, as if they were not really accountable. They just take the pleasure or the profit of the moment, and think no more of it; it is to them no more than throwing a stone into the water, which comes together again, and all seems as before.

3. Neither our heredity nor our circumstances will excuse us. The physiologist comes and he tells me that I inherit in my very blood, in the very structure of my brain, in the vigorous or feeble fibre of my nervous organization, the results of the vices and the virtues of a long line of ancestors. No doubt; but what do you mean by vices and virtues, the results of which I inherit? Are these names of honour and of dishonour, names of praise and condemnation? If there was vice in my ancestors, there may be vice in me. If there was virtue in them, there may be virtue in me. But where there is necessity there is neither virtue nor vice.

[1] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, i. 17.

This doctrine of heredity is no new discovery. It is true that the whole conditions of my life have been determined for me by my ancestors. My strength of muscle, the soundness of my heart and lungs, the limits of my intellectual capacity, have all been settled for me by my birth. And as the result of the moral character of my ancestors my moral life is one of comparative ease or of severe difficulty. But though the conditions of life have been determined for me, my life itself is my own, and that has not been determined for me. The material with which I should work has been given; the way in which I should treat it has not been given.

You tell me that there are great masses of men who have never had a chance of moral goodness. They have to give account of themselves without their chance, if that be so. God knows how large their chance was, and how small. Do not resent by anticipation the justice of the Eternal. He will deal with them according to their conditions. "Virtue is impossible to them," you say. Yes, yours. And there are others who, as they look upon you, say "Virtue is impossible to you." Their virtue is. And yet you and I, under the hard conditions of our life, can choose the better path, however feebly we may walk in it; and who but God can tell what glimmerings of light reach those who seem to sit in outer darkness?[1]

¶ I suppose it does not altogether depend upon a man whether he will be a skilful workman or a clumsy workman. Some men are born with a flexibility and a strength of muscle, a keenness of eye, a delicacy of taste—or rather, with the possibility of achieving these things—of which other men are naturally destitute, and to which they can never attain. But every man can do his best, whatever that best may be. It does not lie in our choice what language we shall speak, but it does lie in our choice whether we will speak the truth or whether we will be indifferent to the claims of truthfulness; whether our language shall be profane or devout, whether it shall be pure or impure. We had no choice into what kind of family we should be born,—whether our parents, our brothers, our sisters, should be rough or gentle, just or unjust; but it lies with us—whether they are rough or gentle, whether they are just or unjust—to treat them with justice and with kindness. The limits of our physical health and vigour are determined for us by the circumstances in which we were born,

[1] R. W. Dale.

but it lies with ourselves to determine whether we will be sober or drunkards, whether we will be gluttonous or temperate.

¶ When William Ellery Channing was a very little boy, his schoolmaster said to one of his school-fellows, "Why are you not a good child like William Channing?" "Oh," replied the boy, "it is so easy for William Channing to be good." We, perhaps, have looked round upon friends of ours to whom the conflict we have to maintain is altogether unnecessary. The foes we have to fight with they never meet. The victories which we have to win for ourselves were won for them generations ago by the ancestors whose blood is in their veins. Shall we complain? God forbid. Let us do for posterity what their ancestors have done for them, taking the rough conditions of our actual life, making the best of them, winning no praise from men for what we accomplish—for they know not the difficulty of the work—rejoicing in this humbly and reverently, that we have to give account of ourselves to God.[1]

> He fixed thee mid this dance
> Of plastic circumstance,
> This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.[2]

II.

It is Inevitable.

"Each one of us *shall give* account."

1. Every man must give account of himself to God. We will not render our account by our fears, or our sensitiveness, or our bad memories, or our dulness of conscience, or our false and artificial views of truth and duty. We shall give it; and yet He will receive or exact it in utter independence of us, He will read us off as being what we are, as being all that already He knows us to be. All the veils which hide us from each other, or from ourselves, will drop away before the glance of His eye. Even now "there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Even now, all that each of us owes to God—

[1] R. W. Dale. [2] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

what graces He has given to us, what dangers and sufferings He has spared us—He knows, and as yet He alone knows. But when we come to give in our account, we shall know too. A flood of light will be poured from His throne across the whole course of our lives, and into every crevice of our souls and characters.

¶ From the outside standpoint judgment is the result of conduct: from the inner standpoint it is the result of character. Conduct is character unfolding itself; and character is the way a man thinks. From the one standpoint judgment is the fruit of men's deeds; from the other it is the fruit of their thoughts. Isaiah puts the same message thus: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Jeremiah's statement is the same, only carried a little deeper to its source. Our destiny is the fruit of our doings and the reward of our hands; and our doing is the fruit of our thoughts. The common feature of both messages is that judgment is not something superimposed on life, a sentence arbitrarily passed on a man. Punishment is not retribution exacted from a man by a superior power outside him; it is the necessary and inevitable consequence flowing from the condition. When will we learn that judgment is not arbitrary or incidental or capricious? It is self-registering, automatic, the harvest of our life. Conduct is the outgrowth of character; and character conditions destiny. The wages of being good is not some recompense added on like a perquisite to a salary. Its highest wages is goodness itself. The recompense of being holy is holiness; the reward of being pure is purity. The punishment of sin is itself, its own loathly, deadly self. The harvest of the flesh is itself, corruption. The penalty of a depraved mind is depravity. The retribution of an impure heart is impurity. Who will deliver us from the body of this death?[1]

2. Whatever God's verdict upon us may be, our consciences will have to affirm its justice. We shall see ourselves by His light, as He sees us, as we have never seen ourselves before. We shall know as never before what He meant us to be, what we might have been, what we are. All the illusions of our present life, all the fabrics of self-satisfaction built up by the kind words of friends or by the insincerities of flatterers, all the atmosphere of twilight which here encompasses our spiritual state, will have

[1] Hugh Black.

rolled away; we shall stand out in the light before the Eternal Judge and before ourselves, and we shall be ready to make full confession.

¶ It is not that God is going to judge us some day. That is not the awful thing. It is that God knows us now. If I stop an instant and know that God knows me through all these misconceptions and blunders of my brethren, that God knows me—that is the awful thing. The future judgment shall but tell it. It is here, here upon my conscience, now.[1]

¶ O Great Mercy of God, I beseech Thee deliver me from the Bonds of Satan. I have no Refuge in any Thing, but only in Thy Holy Wounds and Death. Into Thee I sink down in the Anguish of my Conscience, do with me what Thou wilt. In Thee I will now live or die as pleaseth Thee, let me but die and perish in Thy Death; do but bury me into Thy Death, that the Anguish of Hell may not touch me. How can I excuse myself before Thee, that knowest my Heart and Reins, and settest my Sins before mine Eyes? I am guilty of them, and yield myself unto Thy Judgment; accomplish Thy Judgment upon me, through the Death of my Redeemer Jesus Christ.[2]

3. Confession is inevitable whenever we come into the presence of God. When we draw near to God and behold the light of His countenance the sense of our imperfection must be the instant emotion stirred in the mind, and the first act—the expression of this emotion—must be confession. For confession is not making something known to God. It is God making something known to us; it is God revealing us to ourselves, and our cry of pain at the discovery. It comes from the shock of contrast. To know ourselves we need the help of contrast. To know and see ourselves truly we need a much more searching light than that which comes from moral mediocrity. We need the highest light attainable, and that is the light of God's countenance. Then the sombre recesses of the soul, and all they contain, reveal themselves; and so do its secret bypaths, where the unclean spirits have left their footprints. Confession must be the instant spontaneous product of the vision of God.

¶ Are you ready with your account which you will have to render to God; have you kept one at all? Sometimes when men appear before a court they plead that they have no books, and

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Addresses*, 19. [2] Jacob Behmen.

it is always a bad sign. You know what the judge thinks of them. Can you dare to examine yourself, and answer questions? Can you give an account of your stewardship? Have you kept it correctly, or have you credited yourself with large things where you ought to have debited yourself? Your fraud will be discovered, for the great Accountant will read it through, and will detect an error in a single moment. Is your account kept correctly, and are you ready to render it at this moment?[1]

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fatal lightning of His terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with My contemners, so with you My grace shall deal;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with His heel!
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat;
Oh! be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born, across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me:
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.[2]

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.
[2] Julia Ward Howe, *Battle-Hymn of the Republic.*

III.

It is Personal.

"Each one of us shall give account *of himself*."

1. It would not be difficult for many of us to give an account, more or less exhaustive, of others. We spend our time in thinking them over, talking them over, discussing them. We know, it may be, some true things about them; we suspect a great deal which is not true but utterly false. To some of us, it may be, this discussion of others presents itself as at once an amusement and a relief. It is an amusement, for it costs us nothing to dwell on their failings; and human nature, when we have no immediate stake in it, is always amusing. And it is a relief. To talk about others keeps us at the circumference of our own life; far, very far away from the centre; we do not wish to be with ourselves, within ourselves, alone with ourselves. There are wounds beneath the surface which we would not or dare not probe; there are memories from which we fly, if we can manage it, to something outside and beyond them. Yet, after all, it is of ourselves that we shall have to give account. Others will come into that account only so far as they depend on us; so far as we may have wronged or injured or otherwise affected them. Their shortcomings may now take that place in our thoughts which ought to be given to our own. But a day will come when this will be impracticable. We shall be isolated before the Eternal Judge. We shall form part of a countless multitude, but He will deal with each one of us as if we stood alone before Him and all the rays of His Infinite Wisdom and Justice were concentrated on our case.

¶ When things go wrong, when others provoke us, then the notion is ready enough at hand that they have sinned, that *their* account will be heavy; but we are very slow to comprehend the same thing as it concerns ourselves.[1]

¶ Do not philosophic doctors tell us that we are unable to discern so much as a tree except by an unconscious cunning which combines many past and separate sensations; that no one sense is independent of another, so that in the dark we can hardly taste a fricassee, or tell whether our pipe is alight or not, and the

[1] J. Keble.

most intelligent boy, if accommodated with claws or hoofs instead of fingers, would be likely to remain on the lowest form? If so, it is easy to understand that our discernment of men's motives must depend on the completeness of the elements we can bring from our own susceptibility and our own experience. See to it, friend, before you pronounce a too hasty judgment, that your own moral sensibilities are not of a hoofed or clawed character. The keenest eye will not serve, unless you have the delicate fingers, with their subtle nerve filaments, which elude scientific lenses, and lose themselves in the invisible world of human sensations.[1]

2. We shall have to give an account each of his own actions, of his own thought, of his own words, of his own intention; and, more than all these, of *himself*. We shall each of us have to give account of the state of our heart, of the condition of our mind before God, whether we repented, whether we believed, whether we loved God, whether we were zealous, whether we were truthful, whether we were faithful. If it dealt only with actions, words, and thoughts, the account would be solemn enough, but we must each one give an account of himself, of what he was as well as of what he did, of what was in his heart as well as of what came out of it in his deeds.

A mute companion at my side
  Paces and plods, the whole day long,
Accepts the measure of my stride,
  Yet gives no cheer by word or song.

More close than any doggish friend,
  Not ranging far and wide, like him,
He goes where'er my footsteps tend,
  Nor shrinks for fear of life or limb.

I do not know when we first met,
  But till each day's bright hours are done
This grave and speechless silhouette
  Keeps me betwixt him and the sun.

They say he knew me when a child;
  Born with my birth, he dies with me;
Not once from his long task beguiled,
  Though sin or shame bid others flee.

[1] George Eliot, *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*.

What if, when all this world of men
Shall melt and fade and pass away,
This deathless sprite should rise again
And be himself my Judgment Day?[1]

¶ Daniel Webster was once asked, "What is the most important thought you ever entertained?" He replied, after a moment's reflection, "The most important thought I ever had was my individual responsibility to God."

IV.

It is Supreme.

"Each one of us shall give account of himself *to God.*"

1. Responsibility implies a person, to whom the responsible man is responsible. All human society is based on and kept together by this law of responsibility to persons. We all know that servants are responsible to their masters, and children to their parents and teachers, and soldiers to their commanding officers, and the clerks in a great business house to the partners, and those who are dependent on others to those on whom they depend. The higher you mount the greater the responsibility, because responsibility implies power and grows with power, so that where there is most power there is most responsibility. In reality masters are more responsible than servants, and parents than children, and officers than the soldiers whom they command, and the heads of a great firm than the clerks in their employment, and employers and superiors generally than those whom they employ and who depend on them. But to whom do those highly placed people, more responsible because invested with more power, owe their debt of responsibility? Responsibility is the law of human society; and yet there are always certain members of society who seem to escape it, to be somehow responsible to no one. Wealthy people, with no relations, who as they say, "can do as they like" with their money; idle people, with no duties or engagements, who have, as they put it, to kill time; clever writers or speakers, with no clear sense of truth or duty, who

[1] Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *To my Shadow*.

think that they may write or say, without let or hindrance, just what occurs to them;—if these men are really responsible, to whom are they responsible? So far as this world is concerned, they seem to go through it without having to answer to anybody. To whom is the highest of all, the king, or head of the government, responsible? Assuredly there is One Being to whom all must give account of themselves, sooner or later—both those who have to give account to their fellow-men, and those who seem in this life to escape all real responsibility whatever. One such Being there is to whom we are all responsible—the Holy and Eternal God.

¶ Frightful to all men is Death; from of old named King of Terrors. Our little compact home of an Existence, where we dwelt complaining, yet as in a home, is passing, in dark agonies, into an Unknown of Separation, Foreignness, unconditioned Possibility. The Heathen Emperor asks of his soul: Into what places art thou now departing? The Catholic King must answer: To the Judgment-bar of the Most High God! Yes, it is a summing-up of Life; a final settling, and giving-in the "account of the deeds done in the body"; they are done now; and lie there unalterable, and do bear their fruits, long as Eternity shall last.[1]

For none a ransom can be paid,
A suretyship be made:

I, bent by mine own burden, must
Enter my house of dust;

I, rated to the full amount,
Must render mine account.

When earth and sea shall empty all
Their graves of great and small;

When earth wrapt in a fiery flood
Shall no more hide her blood;

When mysteries shall be revealed;
All secrets be unsealed;

When things of night, when things of shame,
Shall find at last a name,

Pealed for a hissing and a curse
Throughout the universe:

[1] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, i. 17.

Then Awful Judge, most Awful God,
Then cause to bud Thy rod,

To bloom with blossoms, and to give
Almonds; yea, bid us live.

I plead Thyself with Thee, I plead
Thee in our utter need:

Jesus, most Merciful of Men,
Show mercy on us then;

Lord God of Mercy and of men,
Show mercy on us then.[1]

2. "To God." We are not under a rigid law. We are under personal authority, acting in harmony with eternal principles of law; and we have to meet a personal judgment, whose decision will be determined by the eternal principles of law. But this is the supreme thing, that only a living person who knows us altogether can appreciate the true conditions under which our moral life has been lived, the heights we ought to have reached, and the grounds on which we may be forgiven for not having reached heights which were easily accessible to others. We have to give account, each one of himself, to God; and it is this conception of the relations between man and God, and this alone, which relieves human life of its awful gloom and confusion, and contains the promise of a Divine order. For to God some of the noblest forms of moral life may be found where to our eyes there is the least dignity and grace. You were born under felicitous circumstances; but to reach the virtue which you attained without effort, another man may have to exert incessant energy. His dearly bought excellence, though inferior to that which you have easily achieved, is to God infinitely nobler and more precious than the goodness which you, without effort, have accomplished. Each man has to "give account of himself to God."

¶ One man is placed under conditions—conditions not of his own choice, conditions to which he was destined—which make it impossible for him to do very much beyond getting the rough ore of goodness out of the black and gloomy mine. He has got it with the sweat of his brow, with pain, with peril. To him God

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

will say, "Well done!" Another man has the ore at his feet to start with. It is not enough for him to bring that to God. For him there is a different task. In the fires of self-discipline he has to liberate the ore from its dross, and to produce the pure metal. It is enough that one man should bring the rough ore to God; this man must bring pure metal extracted from it. And a third has the metal to begin with. He fails, and fails disastrously unless he works it up into forms of noble usefulness and gracious beauty. Each man will have to "give account of himself to God," and only God can judge of the worth of each man's work, because only God knows the conditions under which each man's work is being carried on.[1]

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.[2]

[1] R. W. Dale. [2] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

A Definition of the Kingdom.

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A Definition of the Kingdom.

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.—Rom. xiv. 17.

"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." That is a glorious saying, because it is so strong, so clear, so sweeping. It lays down a principle to which one may always appeal; it is a fundamental law of the Kingdom which can never be abrogated, or shelved, or made of none effect by human explanations.

St. Paul's readers were scarcely so ignorant and unspiritual as to suppose that the Kingdom of God did consist in eating and drinking. But they were much engrossed just then with questions relating to meat and drink, with warm disputes among themselves as to whether flesh that had formed part of idol sacrifices and had come from heathen altars could consistently be eaten by Christians. They were greatly agitated and exercised about this, some maintaining that it ought not to be eaten, and rigidly refusing to touch it, and others insisting that it might without any inconsistency be eaten; some strenuous for abstinence and urging it as a solemn duty, and others condemning and seeking to draw away from it as a pitiable weakness. St. Paul tells them that this controversy about meat and drink is not furthering the interests of the Kingdom of God. It does not touch the things which belong to the Kingdom, except in the way of hindering them. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The text falls naturally into three divisions:—

I. The Kingdom of God—What are we to understand by it in this connection?

II. The negative statement—What the Kingdom of God is not.

III. The positive statement—What the Kingdom of God is.

I.

The Kingdom of God.

1. It is not a little startling in such a connection to find any mention of the Kingdom of God. We should have expected some very different expression—"the right principle of conduct," or "the true rule of life," or "the proper bond of brotherhood," or "the teaching of the Gospel," or "the Church of Christ." Any of these phrases would have appeared quite natural. But "the Kingdom of God" seems not a little out of place. It seems so only because we do not realize, as the Apostle realized, that the dispensation of the Gospel, the Church of Christ, is itself the very Kingdom of God. Notwithstanding the warning which stands recorded, we persist in thinking that the Kingdom of God cometh by observation, that it must be a kingdom of pomp and circumstance, that therefore it is something very remote and distant and distinct from anything we see about us. But St. Paul viewed it quite otherwise. This little society of men and women; this motley group of Jews, Greeks, Syrians, immigrants from all parts of the world; gathered together mostly from the middle and lower classes of society, artisans and small shopkeepers, struggling for a livelihood; despised where they were not ignored by mighty Rome, in the heart of which they lived—this little society, with its trials and its sufferings and its dissensions, *is* the Kingdom of God.

¶ It may almost be said that it is to Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* we are indebted for Bushnell. He began to read it in college, but it seemed "foggy and unintelligible," and was put aside for "a long time." He took it up later with this result: "For a whole half-year I was buried under his *Aids to Reflection*, and trying vainly to look up through. I was quite sure that I saw a star glimmer, but I could not quite see the stars. My habit was only landscape before; but now I saw enough to convince me of a whole other world somewhere overhead, a range of realities in higher tier, that I must climb after, and, if

possible, apprehend." This book stood by him to the end, and in old age he confessed greater indebtedness to it than to any other book save the Bible. We have only to quote one passage, taken almost at random, to show what a fountain of light was unsealed to him in this volume. It was an epoch-making book, but Bushnell was one of the first to turn its light upon the theology of New England.

"Too soon did the Doctors of the Church forget that the heart, the moral nature, was the beginning and the end; and that truth, knowledge, and insight were comprehended in its expansion. This was the true and first apostasy,—when in council and synod the Divine Humanities of the Gospel gave way to speculative Systems, and Religion became a Science of Shadows under the name of Theology, or at best a bare Skeleton of Truth, without life or interest, alike inaccessible and unintelligible to the majority of Christians. For these, therefore, there remained only rites and ceremonies and spectacles, shows and semblances. Thus among the learned the Substance of things hoped for passed off into Notions; and for the unlearned the Surfaces of things became Substance. The Christian world was for centuries divided into the Many that did not think at all, and the Few who did nothing but think,—both alike unreflecting, the one from defect of the act, the other from the absence of an object." [1]

2. What are the signs by which the citizens of the Kingdom of God are recognized? Not any uniform which can be laid aside when we enter our secret chamber; not any watchword which we can learn by an easy tradition; but a character which clothes itself in deeds, a creed which is translated into a life. Each citizen of the Kingdom is known by the inner life. There is a Kingdom of God *within* us. "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). We are known and marked as citizens, not by outward observances, but by character; not by what we profess, but by what we are.

¶ It's the flesh and blood folks are made on as makes the difference. Some cheeses are made o' skimmed milk and some o' new milk, and it's no matter what you call 'em, you may tell which is which by the look and the smell.[2]

¶ The throne of the Kingdom of God is not erected in the land of *doing*, but in the land of *being*; primarily it is a matter not of clean hands, but of clean hearts.[3]

[1] T. Munger, *Horace Bushnell*, 46.
[2] Mrs. Poyser, in *Adam Bede*.
[3] J. H. Jowett.

II.

What the Kingdom of God is Not.

"The kingdom of God is not *eating and drinking*." Who ever thought it was? It seems a strangely inadequate conception. How did it arise? In heathen society every meal was in a manner dedicated to the household gods by laying some portion of it on the family altar. When one member of a heathen family had become a Christian, he would at once be confronted with the question, rising in his own conscience, whether by partaking of such food he might not be countenancing idolatry. And even though his own family was entirely Christian, the difficulty was not removed, for much of the meat offered in worship in the Temple found its way into the common market, so that at every meal the Christian ran the risk of eating things sacrificed to idols. Was a Christian at liberty to eat such food? "Yes," said one. "No," said another. Each reproved and condemned the other. Which was right? Possibly both. Possibly neither. Said one, "You can eat, and still be of the Kingdom of God." Said another, "If you eat, you are not of the Kingdom of God." And to both of these St. Paul made reply, "The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking"; it is determined by something that lies further backward and inward, by a man's personal relationship to the Holy Ghost.

1. The burning question among the Christians in Rome at this time was the question of meats. Some converts—Jews by birth—brought into the fold of Christ the strict observance of the Mosaic prohibitions in which they had been brought up. They were careful not to violate the distinction of animals clean and unclean, as laid down by the law. Others—educated we know not under what influences—went beyond this. They would not touch animal food at all. They were strict vegetarians. Perhaps they had conscientious objections to taking life; perhaps their abstention was a development of asceticism. Others again, Gentiles by birth and education, took the opposite extreme. They ostentatiously vaunted their indifference in these matters. They would eat anything that came in their way. It might be clean or unclean from a Jewish point of view; it might even

have been offered for sacrifice on a heathen altar in an idol's temple. They suffered no scruple to stand in their path.

But they were not content each to follow his own practice, and to leave his neighbours alone. The abstainers denounced the non-abstainers as men of loose principles who brought dishonour on the Church. The non-abstainers despised the abstainers as men of narrow views who were ignorant of the true Gospel of liberty. Thus there was strife and dissension, there was mutual recrimination, there was hatred and division, where there should have been union and peace and brotherly love.

It was a pitiable dispute in the Apostle's eyes. They needed all the strength which union alone can give; and yet they diminished, they dissipated, they neutralized what force they had by internal quarrels. And quarrels about what? About meats and drinks—things which perish in the using, things mean and transitory, utterly valueless in themselves. It was a pitiable dispute. So the Apostle told them plainly. He pronounced that every creature of God was good. He declared that all things were pure, and nothing was unclean. And, on the other hand, he said that eating and drinking are in themselves so unimportant that every scruple should be respected, and every form of food willingly given up.

2. St. Paul could do no more than bring his own piety and common sense to bear upon the special questions of *his* day: and even he cannot free us from the obligation to use *ours* in the questions of *our* day.

(1) Even to-day we need to remember that "the kingdom of God is not *eating and drinking*." As Christians we can never eat or drink without some distinct reference to Christ, and to our position as His servants and soldiers. But, apart from these considerations of the moral effect it may have upon ourselves and others, there is not anything religious about eating and drinking. It is absolutely indifferent; and all the Church regulations or Church censures in the world cannot make it otherwise. In all ages people have had very strong ideas on the subject of eating and drinking, some of them sensible enough, and some very foolish; but from the point of view of the Kingdom they are equally valueless. To put it quite simply (and sometimes it is well to

use great plainness of speech) God does not care in the very least what or when or how we eat or drink, so as we do not damage ourselves or others. And *He* cannot be *made* to care, and therefore *it* cannot be *made* to matter.

¶ To many minds a ceremony or a form comes with all the force of a principle or a fact. Not "what man has done man may do," but what man has done man must do is their creed, which cramps their limbs and chills their blood and makes them fail of the little good they are seeking. For no man by sheer imitation has yet reached his pattern. Even if in native power he is more than equal to the task, and so in outward deeds even excels his example, the flush and glow of original achievement which made the model a living, warm, breathing thing, is wanting to the copy, which is cold and stiff and dead.[1]

(2) The Kingdom of God is not a particular *form of church service or ritual.* How inevitable a tendency there is in all forms, even the best, to lose all the spirit which once animated them, and become like lifeless corpses.

¶ I do not believe that the doctrines of sacerdotalism and of sacramentalism which are so much in vogue, and which some people would seem to wish to make the very essence of Christianity, as a power of sanctifying the human soul, are doctrines of a true priesthood, or of a true sacramentalism. There is a sad fact which we can neither hide from others nor ignore ourselves, which destroys all the comforts that would naturally flow from this conviction that all good men are really labouring for what they believe to be the extension of Christ's Kingdom, the cause of righteousness, and the good of the souls of men—namely, the fact that excessive ceremonialism is often attended by moral torpor and religious decay. Can history point to a single age, from the womb of time, in which an excessive addiction to ceremonialism and the externals of religion was not accompanied by a corresponding and proportionate dulness of the conscience and deadness to the higher forms of duty? It was so emphatically in Isaiah's day. It was so again, though with a perceptible and instructive difference in outward manifestation—the hypocrisy was more highly organized, the mask more skilfully painted—in the days of Jesus of Nazareth. And with our present-day Epicurean cynicism, cruelly mocking at life, itself secure; abjuring every high aim in the lofty pursuit of personal comfort; checked by no moral considerations whatever in its froward path of pure selfishness;

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Life*, 51.

carelessly wrecking woman's honour, wickedly shattering simple faith; discussing the most solemn verities, at least the most solemn questions, tooth-pick in hand, over olives and wine—with this unhappy, but only too legitimate, offspring of an age that has resolved religion into phrases, and God's service into a gorgeous ceremonialism, I do not feel disposed to hold either truce or terms. Of course questions of ritual must be settled, and St. Paul is careful indeed to tell us that he recognized a law: he speaks of the duty of conforming to the customs of the Churches; he preaches distinctly that God is not the author of confusion; he would have everything done decently and in order; but the law was a law of liberty, not of bondage; the customs were few and simple, and their aim seems to have been not a mystic symbolism, but practical edification; and an elaborate ceremonial, each part in which has to be rehearsed by its actors that the tableau may be complete with a kind of mechanical completeness, would have been perhaps as far removed from St. Paul's ideal of "decency and order" as anything conceivably could be.[1]

¶ Spirit is Eternal—Form is Transient; and when men stereotype the form and call it perpetual, or deny that under other and very different forms the selfsame truths may lie (as the uncovering of Moses' feet is identically the same as our uncovering our heads—ay, and I will even dare to say, often with the *covering* of the Quakers, when reverence for God is the cause for each), then I feel repelled at once, whether the form be a form of words or a form of observance.[2]

> And what are forms?
> Fair garments, plain or rich, and fitting close,
> Or flying looselier, warm'd but by the heart
> Within them, moved but by the living limb,
> And cast aside, when old, for newer,—Forms![3]

(3) The Kingdom of God is not identical with any particular *Church*. This follows necessarily. Yet it is a hard lesson to learn. In every religious communion we find a widespread temper of unrest and dissatisfaction. The man who wishes to take advantage of this unstable temper is always at hand. You must change your sheepfold. But what most people need is not a new Church, a new rite, a new system of doctrine, but a new surrender to the will of God, and a great increase of trust in His redeeming power.

[1] Bishop Fraser.
[2] Tennyson, *Akbar's Dream*.
[3] F. W. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 427.

¶ The holy Church of the future, the Church of the free and equal, shall bless every progress of the Spirit of truth, and identify itself with the life of humanity; it shall have neither Pope nor laity, but all shall be believers, all priests with different offices. And on the transformation of the corrupt aristocratic church of to-day into this renewed popular church of the future, depends, I will not say the solution—that is not in the power of man—but the mode, more or less violent, more or less dangerous, of the solution of the religious question.[1]

> God asks not, "To which sect did he belong?"
> But "Did he love the right and hate the wrong?"[2]

(4) All *rules of conduct* for the Christian, all questions as to legitimate amusements and recreations, come under the same category. These things are *not* the Kingdom of God. A disciplinary rule, as such—that is, a disciplinary rule which begins and ends by being a disciplinary rule—is likely to be a hollow and worthless observance. It would not be untrue to add that a disciplinary rule which begins and ends as a disciplinary rule—a fetter outside and irksome to the heart—may do, and often has done, more harm than good. It does harm to the man himself, because it deceives him, and makes him seem to find holiness, where holiness is not. It does harm to those who are around him, because it does *not* deceive them: because they recognize, and recoil from, an ideal of Christian service which they know to be unreal.

¶ The Bible has no express teaching on the question of amusements. It furnishes us with no list of duties or pleasures to which its ethics and principles may be applied. This has been a disappointment to those who seek in its pages for rules to guide them in every possible contingency. It is not a directory of moral details. Christianity is a temper, a spirit, a Divine motive and law, which is meant to pervade and inspire every part of our life, and not a code of minute regulations by conformity to which we shall be enabled to keep ourselves safe amid surrounding dangers. It says nothing about the callings we should pursue, except to bid us be faithful in the one we have chosen. It does not declare that one calling is more dignified than another, or that there are duties that are worthy and noble and duties that

[1] Bishop Stubbs.

[2] *A Little Book of Eastern Wisdom*, 69.

are common and unclean. It draws no distinction between trades and occupations and engagements, marking some as helpful and others as hurtful. It simply insists that whatever we do we shall do it to the glory of God, and it leaves it to our conscience and common sense to discover whether our conduct and work tend to glorify God or not.[1]

¶ The simple truth is that all these are matters affecting the outward man, the external life. They concern the man's hands but may in no manner concern his heart. A man is not necessarily good because he wears a crucifix, and a man is not necessarily good because he abstains from wearing one. I have heard men declaim against the crucifix who did not possess the spirit of the cross, and their declamation was an offence. A man is not necessarily a Christian because he goes to the theatre; and certainly a man is not necessarily a Christian because he keeps away. You feel that these considerations touch only the surface of the life. They are no indication of the quality and substance of the inner and secret being. And so St. Paul declares that the Kingdom of God is not "eating and drinking"; it is not to be determined by one or two external acts, in which you participate or from which you abstain.[2]

She stood before a chosen few,
With modest air and eyes of blue;
A gentle creature in whose face
Were mingled tenderness and grace.

"You wish to join our fold," they said;
"Do you believe in all that's read
From ritual and written creed,
Essential to our human need?"

A troubled look was in her eyes;
She answered, as in vague surprise,
As though the sense to her were dim:
"I only strive to follow Him."

They knew her life; how, oft she stood,
Sweet in her guileless maidenhood,
By dying bed, in hovel lone,
Whose sorrow she had made her own.

[1] W. Watson, *A Young Man's Ideal*, 152.
[2] J. H. Jowett.

Oft had her voice in prayer been heard,
Sweet as the voice of singing bird;
Her hand been open in distress;
Her joy to brighten and to bless.

Yet still she answered when they sought
To know her inmost earnest thought,
With look as of the seraphim,
"I only strive to follow Him."

Creeds change as ages come and go;
We see by faith, but little know:
Perchance the sense was not so dim
To her who "strove to follow Him."[1]

III.

What the Kingdom of God is.

"The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

1. In every life there is a holy of holies. It is an intensely secret place. The dearest friend we have on earth cannot enter it. It is our temple of secrets, of things which cannot be told. It is a place where only two can meet—our spirit and the Spirit of God. It is that inner sanctuary where God and we come face to face. That secret place is the abode of the Kingdom of God. We have to know that secret place, that innermost heart, to know finally whether or not men and women belong to the Kingdom of God. What are they in their most secret being, where only they and the Holy Ghost can meet? We do not eat meat offered to idols! What are we in our innermost self, where no eye but God's can see us? We do not wear a crucifix! What are we in our heart of hearts, where we meet the Holy Ghost? It is in that utmost privacy of our life that we must look to learn whether we are or are not citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Now the text tells us that when the Kingdom of God is really in the life, there will be three things in that most secret place. There will be "righteousness," "peace," and "joy." When we are

[1] Sarah Knowles Bolton, *Her Creed.*

of the Kingdom of God we will be "righteous" in the secret place where only God and we meet; we will have "peace" in the secret place where only God and we meet; we will have "joy" in the secret place where only God and we meet.

2. "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy." The Kingdom of God, then, is the realization of our human nature's dream and desire, the fulfilment for us of that which we are universally wishing to experience, and reaching out after. It is the object of universal pursuit attained; the answer to the continual cry of humanity. For what is it that is really sought in our manifold and diverse seekings? What is the real end and aim of all labour but these three things in which St. Paul represents the Kingdom of God to consist—righteousness and peace and joy? Wide asunder as our paths may lie, we are all in quest of a common goal. "Who will show us what is good?" "Where are peace and joy to be found?" is the language of all mortal scheming and toil. And as to righteousness, "Would that I could be made right!" is the frequent sigh of thousands whom folly and error hold captive.

¶ "Righteousness, peace, joy": the human heart welcomes these three characteristics as marking the society which answers the promise of creation. In these three, that memorable triad, the battle-cry of revolution, which, in spite of every perversion and misuse, has found a wide response in the souls of nations, receives its highest fulfilment. In "righteousness, peace, joy" we can recognize "equality, liberty, fraternity," interpreted, purified, extended. They tell us that the community and not the individual is the central thought in the life of men. They tell us that the fulfilment of duties and not the assertion of rights is the foundation of the social structure. They tell us that the end of labour is not material well-being, but that larger, deeper, more abiding delight which comes from successfully ministering to the good of others. They tell us that over all that is transitory in the form of the Kingdom, over all the conditions which determine its growth, there rests the light, the power, of an Eternal Presence.[1]

i. Righteousness.

1. According to St. Paul, the first thing which characterizes the establishment of the Kingdom of God in human life is that we

[1] Westcott, *Social Aspects of Christianity*, 90.

become righteous, *right with God* in our innermost self. If I want the structure of the Kingdom of God to be built up in my life, then I must begin at the base, at the foundation; and the fundamental requisite is that in the very depths of my being I must become right with God. This is the fundamental requirement; not that we should get peace or possess joy, but that we should be put right, rejoined to God. Our worship, our churches, our Christian institutions, have for their primary purposes the putting of man right with God. The great purpose of them all is this: to bring our lives into touch with God, to join ourselves to Him, that His life may flow like healing waters into ours, to make righteousness—agreement between ourselves and God our Lord—to make "righteousness in the Holy Ghost."

2. Righteousness comes *first*, before peace and joy. How we do try to reverse the order! We want the peace of the Kingdom before its righteousness, and God cannot give it. Suppose I go to a doctor with my arm out of joint, and say to him, "Doctor, I cannot get any rest or peace. I pass through painful days and sleepless nights. I want you to give me a sleeping draught that I may enjoy a little rest." I think the doctor would smile and say, "My dear sir, it is not a sleeping draught you need to give you a few hours of unnatural peace. You must get your arm into its socket; set that right, and then Nature will give you her own sleep and her own peace." But is not that somewhat analogous to what we do in the spiritual life? We seek for spiritual peace; we go in for all manner of sleeping draughts which make our consciences sleep but do not refresh us, and we do not find the peace we seek. And this Book, the great Physician's Book, says to us, "Men and women, your life is out of joint, and you will not get peace until the severance is righted. In your most secret being you must be joined to the Lord." That is the teaching of this Book, as it is certainly the findings of experience.

¶ Real righteousness—what is it? In one word, it is surrender to the will of God. This is the peculiarity of the righteousness which is evangelical. It is from within: it is life: it is God in the soul of man: it is the life of the spirit. It is not a creed learned by heart; it is not a set of habits acquired; it is not a circle of customs scrupulously observed. It is not a righteousness done, but an infinite yearning after a righteousness which is

ever doing. It is not a self-satisfaction which numbers up its performances, but an infinite humility which reckons its best performances as nothing.

This righteousness can set forms at nought, neglecting them. It can afford to make nothing of them. Christ's disciples neglected the observance of the very honoured custom of washing the hands when they ate bread. Consider what might have been urged: This is an old time-honoured observance. You owe respect to constituted authorities. Who are you that presumptuously set yourselves up against the customs of your Church and country? Such things were said. But the disciples heeded them not, and Christ supported them in their neglect.

Let us understand this. Doubtless it is a duty to comply with customs, social and ecclesiastical. A man who sets them at defiance is a man of presumptuous spirit. But there are periods when the forms of society become thoroughly false. Then the strong man breaks through the cobwebs of etiquette, asserting the real courtesies of the heart. And there are times when priests and parties multiply observances till life is trammelled, and make things essential which are not essential. Then it becomes a duty, if we would imitate Christ, to assert Christian liberty, and to refuse to be bound by the cry of custom, modesty, or constituted authority.[1]

With eager heart and will on fire,
I fought to win my great desire;
"Peace shall be mine," I said; but life
Grew bitter in the weary strife.

My soul was tired, and my pride
Was wounded deep: to Heaven I cried,
"God grant me peace or I must die";
The dumb stars glittered no reply.

Broken at last, I bowed my head,
Forgetting all myself, and said,
"Whatever comes, His will be done";
And in that moment peace was won.[2]

The Kingdom of God within us is rightness with God, and from that rightness with God comes *right dealing with our fellowmen.* Not carping criticism, not fault-finding and intolerance,

[1] F. W. Robertson. [2] Henry Van Dyke.

but righteousness and just dealing, should be the characteristic of the citizens of the Kingdom.

Righteousness is a term of comprehensive scope. It comprises honesty, truthfulness, sincerity—all the elements which combine to form uprightness and frankness and nobility of character. Righteousness is straightforward in intellectual matters as well as in practical. Righteousness respects the feelings, the affections, the character of others as well as their property. Righteousness is therefore temperate, is pure, is chivalrous. Righteousness pays deference to enemies as well as to friends. It is scrupulously careful not to misrepresent, not to depreciate, not to wrong in any way an antagonist—whether a personal or a religious antagonist.

¶ Can no one stop the din that profanes the grave of Robert Burns? Has no one the heart to hear the "inhabitant below" or to understand his voice? Of all perverse destinies with which earth could perplex his fame, did it ever visit his imagination that crowds of rhetorical men would go about in never-ending floods of eloquence to prove his life a great moral victory and triumph? Did he ever foresee that every after-dinner orator who wished to show what a flexible thing advanced Christianity can be, would harp upon the passages that saddened his own thoughtful hours, as proofs of what may comport with high moral and Christian excellency? Shame upon them that are so destitute of love for Burns, that have so little sympathy with the pathos of his own view of his own life, as not to understand they are to let that alone! Why cannot they let it alone? Let them celebrate his genius, if it needs to be celebrated; let them celebrate his honest manhood—a great deal too straightforward, I will be bold to say, to tolerate the despicable sophistry that is spent on his career—let them dwell on the undying glow he has shed into Scottish minds and hearts and homes and lives and history; and, for the rest, let it alone. But if they will not, on themselves be the shame.

> A curse upon the clown and knave
> That will not let his ashes rest.[1]

ii. Peace.

1. Having got right with God, being joined to God, and purified in the most secret place, we shall then discover the second char-

[1] Principal Rainy, *Church of Scotland*, 159.

acteristic of the Kingdom, the possession of an abiding peace. The Kingdom of God is peace in the Holy Ghost, peace in that secret place where only God and we meet. There shall be a holy quietude, an unbroken peace in our innermost self. In our hearts there shall be a Sabbath restfulness all the year round. There shall be all the sweet stillness of a June noontide in our souls. We shall be calm there, where we meet with God! That place is for many of us a place of great unrest. The last place into which many of us would go for peace would be into the secret heart where we meet alone with God. It is the place above all others where there rages a storm. We have to be righted with God before we can look upon Him with sweet and calm delight. But when we are united to Him, joined to Him in right relationship, then there comes to us the gift of His peace. "My peace I give unto you"; receiving My life you shall receive My peace, the same serenity in danger, the same equanimity in troublous surroundings, the same freedom from anxious care, "My peace!"

¶ Have you ever spoken to any one who had passed out of storm and turbulence into the possession of Christ's peace? Ask them what it means, and they will tell you that when Christ gives His peace, He takes the threat out of yesterday, the despondency out of to-day, and the fear out of to-morrow. When God is shut out of the secret place, His voice rings through it like the weird tolling of a funeral bell. But when God comes in and brings His peace, the threatening bell is silenced. As for to-morrow, for him who is perfectly joined to the Lord, anxiety and fear are lost in perfect trust, and perfect trust is the mother of perfect peace.[1]

> Oh, this is peace! I have no need
> Of friend to talk, of book to read:
> A dear Companion here abides;
> Close to my thrilling heart He hides;
> The holy silence is His voice:
> I lie and listen and rejoice.[2]

2. There will be peace in the community where righteousness prevails. Wherever there is any hesitation about lines of action, peace must step in and decide. Not self-assertion, not consistency, not stickling for rights, not punctiliousness about details, but peace must carry the day. "Peace I leave with you," said Christ,

[1] J. H. Jowett. [2] John Townsend Trowbridge.

and already the small band of believers is torn into factions quarrelling bitterly over questions of meat and drink.

¶ The herald angels sang "on earth peace." Nineteen centuries have passed, and Christianity is still a revolutionary and disturbing element wherever it comes, and the promise seems to linger, and the great words that declared "Unto us a child is born . . . and his name shall be . . . The Prince of Peace," seem as far away from fulfilment as ever they were. Yes, because He is *first of all* King of Righteousness, and must destroy the evil that is in the world before He can manifest Himself as King of Peace, His kingdom of Peace will be set up through confusion and destruction, overturning and overturning until the world has learned to know and love His name. First, King of Righteousness—that, at all hazards; that, though conflict may dog His steps and warfare ever wait upon Him—first, King of Righteousness, and *after that*, King of Peace. So the sum of the whole thing is, peace is sure; peace with God; peace in my own tranquil and righteous heart; peace for a world from out of which sin shall be scourged; peace is sure because righteousness is ours since it is Christ's.[1]

iii. Joy in the Holy Ghost.

1. When our life is righted with God in its most secret depths, when there comes into its secret place an unbroken peace, there also springs in the life a deep and quiet joy. "The kingdom of God is joy." Is righteousness the pole-star of our lives? Is peace the music of our hearts? If so, then to us, as to the shepherds of old, the message of the Epiphany is addressed, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great *joy*." If so, then on us, as true and faithful citizens, loyal to the laws and customs of the Kingdom, our Sovereign will confer His crowning privilege, "joy in the Holy Ghost." Not joy as men count joy; no earthly passion and no transitory excitement; but the abiding inward satisfaction of a conscious harmony with the will of God.

2. Joy comes *after* peace. Righteousness is the root; peace the stem; joy the blossom. The disappointment so often experienced in the search for happiness is traceable to the non-observance of this order. Joy is put before righteousness and peace.

[1] A. Maclaren.

Who are thy playmates, boy?
"My favourite is Joy,
Who brings with him his sister Peace, to stay
The livelong day.
I love them both; but he
Is most to me."

And where thy playmates now,
O man of sober brow?
"Alas! dear Joy, the merriest, is dead.
But I have wed
Peace; and our babe, a boy,
New-born, is Joy."[1]

3. Joy grows out of peace. In growing calm we become more easily gladdened, more alive to gladdening influences. Why is it that we are so much more pleased to-day than we were yesterday; why has the same scene so much more in it to set us singing, except that we are more at ease to-day than we were yesterday? "Wordsworth's inborn religious placidity," writes one, "had matured in him a quite unusual sensibility to the sights and sounds of the natural world, to the flower and its shadow on the stone, the cuckoo and its echo, the pliant harebell swinging in the breeze, the sweetness of a common dawn, the dance

Of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees."

Mental placidity gives sensibility to many joys of life which in its absence would not thrill or touch us at all, opens our ears to the music of the spheres, and causes the spirit of delight to come to us often on very tiny wings.

If sin be in the heart,
The fairest sky is foul, and sad the summer weather,
The eye no longer sees the lambs at play together,
The dull ear cannot hear the birds that sing so sweetly,
And all the joy of God's good earth is gone completely,
If sin be in the heart.

If peace be in the heart,
The wildest winter storm is full of solemn beauty,
The midnight lightning flash but shows the path of duty,

[1] John Bannister Tabb, *The Playmates.*

Each living creature tells some new and joyous story,
The very trees and stones all catch a ray of glory,
If peace be in the heart.[1]

4. Jesus names to us a striking peculiarity about the joy of the righteous: "Your joy no man taketh from you." No thief of accident or circumstance can steal it! If we find the joy of our life merely in entertainment or amusement, in the club or in the ball-room, there is many a thief can take it away from us. Poverty may dry up our resources in a day. Sickness may throw us upon ourselves, and make a wide gulf between us and our joys. We are called to a joy compared with which all other joys are very insipid and tame, the joy of being a friend of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost.

If once such joy had filled thine heart,
Earth's hatred or earth's scorn
Would seem but as a moment's smart,
Forgot as soon as borne.
Nay, thou in pain, or shame, or loss,
Christ's fellowship wouldst see,
And with thine heart embrace the cross
On which He hung for thee.

Wouldst count it blest to live, to die,
Where He is all in all;
Where rapt, earth unperceived goes by
And from ourselves we fall.
Till, from His secret place below,
To mansions fair above,
He leads thee, there to make thee know
The perfect joys of love.

[1] Charles Francis Richardson, *Peace.*

The Privilege of the Strong.

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The Privilege of the Strong.

We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.—Rom. xv. 1.

1. It was essential that men whose prejudices and instincts were different should live in the same church and eat at the same love feast. Formerly, as in Syria and Palestine, it was the Jews who occupied the position of vantage in the Christian communities, and were not disposed to tolerate the ways of the Gentiles. Now the tables are turned, and the Gentiles are in the majority. And the danger is that those whose instincts are Gentile should bear hardly upon the minority whose prejudices are more or less Jewish. This, St. Paul anticipates, or knows from Priscilla and Aquila, will be the danger among the Roman Christians. To be told he must not use his normal liberty, must not eat his usual meal or drink his usual cup of wine, because it might scandalize some Christian with the ascetic prejudices of an Essene, or even induce him to do the same against his own conscience—to be told this was annoying to a man who held the "strong" Christian conviction that all kinds of food were indifferently allowable. The weak scruple of his brother Christian had become an annoying burden of self-denial and self-restraint laid on himself.

"We"—who are the "we"? Christians; but among Christians, the strong. It is very noticeable that the Apostle has no corresponding exhortation to the weak. One would expect that he who writes to servants and masters, to wives and husbands, at the same time, would, in a connection like this, address also the weak while speaking to the strong. But it is not so. One reason may be that he foresaw that very few would be willing to accept that term as descriptive of themselves and their state—that for one who would go and stand under the inscription, "the weak," there would be ten ready to stand under the name and title of "the strong." They might hold those particular opinions and pre-

judices regarding meats, and regarding the Mosaic law, which the Apostle here expressly declares to be characteristic of "the weak," in fact, to *constitute* the weakness, yet they themselves would be the last to allow or to perceive this. They would rather be disposed to think themselves strong, and firm, and faithful, holding on to truth and Divine commandment amid general defection. The same difficulty would be found now in getting any considerable number of people in a community to acknowledge themselves "weak" in any matter of Christian faith or intelligence. Therefore we do not need an exhortation to the weak. It is the strong that we are to urge not to please themselves.

¶ How little difference there is between the scruples of the Jewish Christians and those which vex the Church to-day. The scruples which perplex ordinary Christian people, especially young Christians, to-day are commonly connected either with the ritual or with the ethics of religion. Ought fermented wine to be used in the Communion service? Can every line of a hymn honestly express the feeling of those who sing it? Is it wrong to play at cards or to smoke cigarettes? What kinds of recreation are lawful for us on Sunday?[1]

2. St. Paul applies the law of Tolerance. He would have the followers of Christ forbearing one with another as the Master was forbearing with them. Christ was pre-eminently broad and many-sided, touching and attracting human nature in all its aspects. His disciples represent the extremes of temperament, from the sanguine outspoken Peter to the quiet reflective John, and within these all the rest move and act in their own likeness. He is never careful to stamp on them a hard uniformity, but leaves them to their own natural development, and aids them in it. Then, outside this circle, we have groups of all possible colours,—the Pharisee and the Publican, Nicodemus and Zacchæus, Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene, the woman by the well and the women at the sepulchre, the centurion beside the cross and the thief upon it. He draws all men unto Him, and while there is a change in the depth of their nature, while a higher life is infused into them, it unfolds itself in every direction without constraint, as the earth in spring-time is drawn forth into every

[1] T. H. Darlow.

form and colour of leaf and flower by the all-sympathetic attraction of the sun. We do not admire enough this generosity of mind in our great Master, so different from that which prevails among the founders of human systems, who cannot be satisfied unless their formulas are repeated, and their minutest features reflected, by all their scholars. His word "came with power," not to stamp with the uniformity of death, but to create the manifoldness of life. How very different was the society which gathered round Jesus of Nazareth from that harsh spiritual despotism which Loyola sought to create under His name!

¶ Real tolerance means to have a belief, and to be aware of another man's belief which disagrees with it; to consider the disagreement of essential importance; to have the power, and be able to find an opportunity, of combating, perhaps of extinguishing it; then, to forbear; even to let the adverse, the noxious thing work. Not that I understand by toleration a duty to stand neutral in the contest. Only they in such circumstances can be neutral who do not mind; for whom to be tolerant is no virtue. With genuine tolerance the fullest loyal exercise of the same liberty as is allowed to the other side is entirely consistent. All which is inhibited is the use of unfair weapons in the strife.[1]

¶ In the *Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, Mr. Wilfrid Meynell gives an account of a visit paid by the Cardinal, when he was Bishop of Manchester, to one of the Salvation Army Shelters. In one room sat a number of women, mostly old women, at various sorts of needlework. "Are any of my people here?" asked the Bishop, addressing the assembly. And, dotted about the room, aged dames, in the dignity of Poverty, stood up for their Faith. Then the Bishop turned on the Captain: "And do these attend Protestant prayers?" "They attend the praises of God every evening." "And what do you preach?" "We preach Christ and Him Crucified, and we shall be very pleased if you will stay and so preach Him this evening. We are quite unsectarian." This was too much. "Well, but if I told them that unless they were baptized they could not be saved?" "I should tell them that it was not true," said the Captain. "And I should tell them that it was not true," echoed Cardinal Manning when we told him the story an hour later; "I should explain to them the Church's doctrine of the Baptism of Desire."[2]

¶ Surely we might make more allowance for the roads we

[1] W. Stebbing, *Three Essays*, 7.
[2] *Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, i. 481.

walk in if the great ends we aim at are the same. Our paths through life are like the great tracks men map out on the seas. They say they go the same way that the ships of old have gone; they mean they seek the same harbour, round the same headlands, shun the same quicksands, read the same, silent, constant stars. But the waves they plough have changed a myriad times; the great unrest or circumstance has broken into confusion the unquiet road they travel, but they call it still the same, because by the same great eternal sureties, it points them to the same old heaven. So by the sure witness of faith we pass over the restless path of human accident to the great truth harbour that we seek.[1]

3. Christ did not merely refrain from interfering with free growth Himself, He interposed to defend others when they were interfered with. His most marked action is in behalf of liberty, and He is strongest in rebuke when He checks the attempt of any one to thrust his own character on another, to the destruction of its genuineness. What a lesson there is to contending, narrow-minded religionists, who can see nothing beyond their own circle, in His answer: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us" (Luke ix. 49). "Forbid him not; for he that is not against you is for you." It is as if He had said, "We must not narrow the cause of God to our own party, but rejoice in goodness wherever it appears. If we are right it is all coming our way."

¶ Crawford had cashiered or suspended his lieutenant-colonel for the sore offence of holding wrong opinions in religion. Cromwell's rebuke (March 1643) is of the sharpest. "Surely you are not well advised thus to turn off one so faithful in the cause, and so able to serve you as this man is. Give me leave to tell you, I cannot be of your judgment; cannot understand it, if a man notorious for wickedness, for oaths, for drinking, hath as great a share in your affection as one who fears an oath, who fears to sin. Ay, but the man is an Anabaptist. Are you sure of that? Admit that he be, shall that render him incapable to serve the public? *Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies.* I advised you formerly to bear with men of different minds from yourself; if you had done it when I advised you to do it, I think you would not have had so many

[1] A. V. G. Allen, *Phillips Brooks*, 92.

stumbling-blocks in your way. *Take heed of being sharp, or too easily sharpened by others, against those to whom you can object little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion.*"[1]

¶ The Government introduced a Bill to permit an affirmation to be made by Mr. Bradlaugh. Gladstone made one of his most magnificent speeches in support of this Bill. Never did he appear to me to greater advantage. I should think he literally loathed the theological—or non-theological—opinions of Mr. Bradlaugh. Between the two men there could be no personal sympathy whatever. But Mr. Gladstone saw in him the sign, symbol, and impersonation of a gross political injustice; and, rising superior to all petty, personal, or sectarian feelings, he pleaded with amazing and overpowering eloquence for justice, equality, and freedom of opinion. He knew the folly of attempting in any way to coerce opinion and to place any kind of penalty upon it.[2]

4. The exercise of this law of tolerance is possible since Christ ascended as it was not possible while He was on earth. His withdrawal from earth in His visible person is in favour of free Christian development, since the very presence of a visible Lord and Lawgiver, however wise and tolerant, must tend to uniformity in the character of His subjects. The principle of working by His Spirit is to enter into each nature by itself, and unfold it from its own germ and centre. It is the lifting up and widening of the first overshadowing canopy of His personal guidance, which was needful in its time, into the grand arch of the heavens, beneath which all can grow up more freely and expansively. It is for wise reasons, in regard to Christian growth, that a visible Head is removed from the Christian Church, and that the liberal unconstrained movements of faith are substituted, meanwhile, for the limitation and fixity of sight. We can perceive how the disciples started up into stronger, broader men, under this new influence, and how their characters struck out on all sides into more marked individuality. There was a presence of Christ to implant the first seeds, and foster them; then a departure, that they might grow up more freely in His absence, till through His Spirit they reach a full stature and

[1] John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, 131.
[2] *Sir Wilfrid Lawson*, 170.

firm character. When these are gained, and individuality is fully formed, there can be a safe return to that closest proximity to Him which is their highest happiness, and where, too, they shall feel that the law of love is perfect liberty.

¶ The natural history of toleration seems simple, but it is in truth one of the most complex of all the topics that engage either the reasoner or the ruler; and until nations were by their mental state ready for religious toleration, a statesman responsible for order naturally paused before committing himself to a system that might only mean that the members of rival communions would fly at one another's throats, like Catholics and Huguenots in France, or Spaniards and Beggars in Holland. In history it is our business to try to understand the possible reasons and motives for everything, even for intolerance.[1]

¶ Christian freedom is no trifle, although it may concern a trifle.[2]

5. Now, if we showed this tolerance after the mind of Christ what effect would it have on the "weak"? Would not the kindly attention paid to their scruples—the kindly respect evinced for them by those who did not share them—would it not tend to soften their prejudice against the views of the other side, to make them more ready to weigh arguments from thence, and more open to conviction; winning them, perhaps, to re-examine the subject with a care and a candour they had never previously given it, with a care and a candour that might end in their ultimate conversion to truer ideas? The mistaken are too frequently averted from the truer ideas with which we would possess them, and driven to hug more tenaciously their own, by the contemptuous or derisive treatment which these receive. With a lack of due tenderness and due reverence on our part for what they honestly think, we help to keep them where they are, and prevent the requisite listening to and entertainment on their part, of what might otherwise gradually commend itself to them.

I.

The Weak.

1. Every community has its contingent of weaklings, who require much study and care, and are more or less of a burden

[1] John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, 171. [2] Luther.

upon their comrades. Indeed, in some places the Church of Jesus Christ seems to be made up of valetudinarians. Its courts are as much thronged by the halt, the maimed, the half-palsied, the crutch-going, as those gay but depressing resorts that are built near hot mineral springs. The weakness and infirmity huddled together in some places "where prayer is wont to be made" sadden the observer. Men who should be the strength and stay of discipleship, pillars in a spiritual temple, are wind-shaken reeds, and pass through many ignoble moods of faithlessness, wavering, egoism, and caprice. Christian society should be a colony of giants. But to-day it resembles more an institution for sheltering Mephibosheths who are lame in their feet than a training-school of Samsons.

2. Let us look at some of the causes of this lamentable weakness.

(1) In some cases moral and religious weakness is bound up with constitutional infirmities. A hereditary blot, or perhaps an accumulation of blots not flagrantly black, may explain the weakness and wavering of inconsistent members of the Church. Men may be disqualified for success in a Christian society, or in the outside world, by the double handicap of birth and training. They are amongst the stragglers in business matters, and have no compensating record in the Kingdom of God. An obvious lack of vitality shows itself. The movements of hands, feet, blood, and brain are indeterminate. The poor creatures are only half-alive, narrow-chested, shallow-thoughted, shrunken-souled. The pace at which they crawl justifies the most abject words of self-abasement used. The anæmic habit follows them into religion. They think feebly, feel languidly, act without promptness and complete decision. Perhaps there is an intermittent touch of hectic spirituality in their lives; but tone, emphasis, strongly marked Christian qualities, are wanting. They may backslide at any moment, and their state calls out many fears.

¶ It is said that when heavy and continuous rain falls on the fells of the north the ground becomes so sodden that the sheep will stand stupefied in the same spot for hours, sinking deeper and deeper into the mire. They make no effort to reach a sure foothold, and, unless "dogged" out, die in numbers. And some of those who have put themselves within the care of the Church

have to be hunted again and again out of the gaming-club, the dram-shop, the place of the scornful, and the scene of tainted pleasure. They seem to be mazed with stupefaction, and to have lost all power of helping themselves.[1]

(2) But religious weakness sometimes appears amongst those for whom little or no excuse can be made. A pious ancestry, with all its benefits, does not always produce moral strength and vigour in the offspring. The descendants of godly forefathers drift on summer tides into a superficial enjoyment of religion, without soul-struggle and sharp sacrifice. The self-protective instincts and equipments of sterner days are lost. Perhaps there is a recoil from the rigour of home discipline, and the attempt to put too much into the child has produced a feeling of satiety. The decrepit are many and the robust few, and the children even of Christians need unsleeping care and attention if they are to be kept in the right path. To-day this man sleeps in the pleasant arbour, and, on waking, finds that his roll is gone; to-morrow he is in Bypath Meadow. Those whose association with the people of God is hereditary get into Doubting Castle, as well as pilgrims who have come straight from the heart of Babylon.

Lord, not for light in darkness do we pray,
Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes,
Nor that the slow ascension of our day
Be otherwise.

Not for a clearer vision of the things
Whereof the fashioning shall make us great,
Not for remission of the peril and stings
Of time and fate.

Not for a fuller knowledge of the end
Whereto we travel, bruised yet unafraid,
Nor that the little healing that we lend
Shall be repaid.

Not these, O Lord. We would not break the bars
Thy wisdom sets about us; we shall climb
Unfettered to the secrets of the stars
In Thy good time.

[1] T. G. Selby.

We do not crave the high perception swift
When to refrain were well, and when fulfil,
Nor yet the understanding strong to sift
The good from ill.

Not these, O Lord. For these Thou hast revealed,
We know the golden season when to reap
The heavy-fruited treasure of the field,
The hour to sleep.

Not these. We know the hemlock from the rose,
The pure from stained, the noble from the base,
The tranquil holy light of truth that glows
On Pity's face.

We know the paths wherein our feet should press,
Across our hearts are written Thy decrees,
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
With more than these.

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,
Grant us the purpose ribbed and edged with steel,
To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou has lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need,
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed.[1]

(3) Some of the laggards who vex and burden the Church have an impaired religious experience because, at the beginning, their surrender to the call of the Gospel was defective. They failed to count the cost of discipleship, and have not hitherto thought it necessary to repair the early omission. Buoyed up with the promises of the evangel, which, like the early disciples, they construed in a somewhat worldly sense, they came in with the others. Perhaps they allowed themselves to be dragged into religion by the pressure of friends, and made no firm, deliberate choice of their own. Upon the promise of the world they are inclined to lean—much at some times, and not quite so much at other times. The spiritual has never come to them with

[1] John Drinkwater, *Poems of Men and Hours*, 1.

such convincing demonstration that they can stake all their interests on it. In the comforts, promises, associations of religion, they feel some measure of satisfaction, but would not like to be quite shut up to these things. A strain of respectable selfishness enters into their religion.

Fain would I climb the heights that lead to God,
  But my feet stumble and my steps are weak—
  Warm are the valleys, and the hills are bleak:
Here, where I linger, flowers make soft the sod,
But those far heights that martyr feet have trod
  Are sharp with flints, and from the farthest peak
  The still, small voice but faintly seems to speak,
While here the drowsy lilies dream and nod.

I have dreamed with them, till the night draws nigh
  In which I cannot climb: still high above,
In the blue vastness of the awful sky,
  Those unscaled peaks my fatal weakness prove—
Those shining heights that I must reach, or die
  Afar from God, unquickened by His love.[1]

II.

The Strong.

St. Paul advises those who sympathize with him to subdue their impatience with the scrupulosity of the feeble-minded and to put a tax on their own Christian liberty if by such harmless concessions the peace and liberty of the Church could be promoted. To do this is difficult enough, and it is good, but after all it is a low level. Does the Apostle Paul, glowing with zeal and love, mean no more by his exhortation "Bear the infirmities of the weak"? His words lift us into the high level of suffering. "Bear with" is not enough. We must "bear"—carry with difficulty, perhaps bleed under—the burdens of those others who are weaker than ourselves.

We must not only tolerate the blind man who tramples down our flowers. The loss of his sight must be felt by us as a personal loss.

[1] Louise Chandler Moulton.

1. The law that the strong are to care for, support, and cherish the weak is not a natural law. We are confronted every day with the spectacle of a life in which, so far from the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak, it is the condition of their very existence that they should crush and destroy the weak. Interesting analogies have often been drawn between the natural and the spiritual life, and attempts have even been made to show that the same laws hold good in both. But here at least we have a case in which the law of the spiritual world is the very reverse of that which obtains in the natural. The law of nature, we are told, in regard to all the lower forms of life, is success to the strong, failure and extermination to the weak. Everywhere around us, it is said, on the surface of the earth, there is going on a struggle for existence, in which, as there is not room for all, the weak must inevitably succumb, while the strong survive and multiply. The order of physical nature constitutes a stern and unchangeable environment which favours, at the expense of all others, those natures which have any special fitness to combat with its hostile, or avail themselves of its favourable, conditions. To all others nature is absolutely merciless. If we can trace advancement or progress in this sphere, it is an advancement every step of which is marked by the crushing out of the feeble, and the survival only of the strongest and fittest.

¶ If you plant a rose tree in the shadow of an oleander, the rose tree will die and the oleander will flourish and fatten on its life. The weak succumbs to the strong. The grip of the strangler is upon all feeble plants in field and forest. The same holds true of animal life. Wolves rend in pieces a wounded member of their pack. The lion devours the lamb, and grows stronger by absorbing the strength of the vanquished.

¶ The same law holds good in politics as in nature. The Survival of the Fittest has ever been the determining factor in international affairs. The weaker nations have gone down, one by one, devoured by the strong, until in our time there is a concentration of authority in a voracious group known as The Great Powers. War is the process by which their supremacy has been accomplished and is being kept up. "War is hell," said General Sherman; but what of that? The monopoly must be maintained. Will you appeal to arbitration? Arbitration will

work only when war is inexpedient; that is, when both parties to the controversy are afraid to fight.[1]

2. In Christ's Kingdom the law is changed. It is no longer the Survival of the Fittest. It is the Survival of the Unfit. This change was not accomplished easily. It came only through pain. Christ Himself had to come into the world as God's protest against the Survival of the Fittest. He, the Fittest, had to die, in order that the unfit might survive. It was for this that He came into the world. It was for this that He emptied Himself of heaven's wealth, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. It was for this that He climbed up Calvary with our sins upon His breaking heart. "Come down from the cross," they cried, "if thou be the Son of God." It was because He was the Son of God that He could not come down. As the Strong, He must die for the weak. Of all in earth and heaven He was the Fittest; and through His self-denial the unfit must live.

3. Having laid, in His own blood, the foundations of a new dispensation of universal love and helpfulness, Christ sent forth a summons to all like-minded with Himself. Follow me, in the setting up of a kingdom of love in the world—a kingdom in which every man shall minister to the weaker man, in which ye shall find life by losing it and serve God in caring for your fellows.

Our Lord served other people to the point of physical weakness and exhaustion, and even unto death. Our service too frequently ends where blood-letting begins. We stop short of the promise of fertility. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Yes, and the blood of the servant fertilizes the field of his service. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood!" And it is just at that point of resistance that we begin to win. It is just when our service becomes costly that it begins to pay. Life becomes contagious when it becomes sacrificial. Our work begins to tell when the workman is content to suffer, when he persists even unto blood. But is it not true that for many of us our service ends just when we reach the bitter cup? "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?" No, we are

[1] D. J. Burrell.

not able, and when our service becomes bitter we give it up. "From that time"—Calvary in sight—"many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

¶ We may have "all things in common" with Christ; nay, it is the high sign and seal of fellowship that we do sit with Him at the common board. But here is our frequent mistake, that we regard that table as laden only with welcome provisions, and even with delicate and dainty luxuries. On that table there is the provision of peace, and the provision of joy, and the provision of glory! And over all the table, from end to end of it, there is the soft and healing light of grace. That is how we think of the table, and, blessed be God! all these rare provisions are surely to be found at the feast, and we may have all these things "in common" with the Lord. But there is also another cup upon the table, a cup that is very near the Master's hand, a cup which we very frequently forget or ignore. It is a bitter cup, the cup of the Lord's sufferings.

"Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?" Are we prepared to have "all things in common"? We drink the cup of kindness, the overflowing cup of redeeming grace. "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?" Now, it was upon that cup that the aged Apostle fixed his covetous eyes, that cup that was nearest his Saviour's hand, the cup of bitterness and woe. "I have tasted," I think I hear him say, "I have tasted and seen how gracious He is; I have drunk the cup of His salvation, but I thirst for a deeper communion still; not only the sweet and palatable cup, but that dark and bitter cup would I taste; that cup whose contents are as blood. I would have 'all things in common.'"[1]

This mood hath known all beauty, for it sees
O'erwhelmed majesties
In these pale forms, and kingly crowns of gold
On brows no longer bold,
And through the shadowy terrors of their hell
The love for which they fell,
And how desire which cast them in the deep
Called God too from His sleep.
Oh, pity, only seer, who looking through
A heart melted like dew,
Seest the long perished in the present thus,
For ever dwell in us.
Whatever time thy golden eyelids ope
They travel to a hope;

[1] J. H. Jowett.

Not only backward from these low degrees
To starry dynasties,
But, looking far where now the silence owns
And rules from empty thrones,
Thou seest the enchanted hills of heaven burn
For joy at our return.
Thy tender kiss hath memory we are kings
For all our wanderings.
Thy shining eyes already see the after
In hidden light and laughter.[1]

III.

The Way of the Strong with the Weak.

If the strong neglect the weak they go back to the doctrine of a limited redemption. Did Jesus Christ die only for the strong, the steadfast, the sound-minded? Are morbid, irresolute, wavering souls reprobate from their birth? If we believe in the redemption of the halt, the maimed, the half-palsied in will and religious capacity, let us come back to first principles and act upon them. Strength and perfection are often reached through temporary inconsistency and failure. The Bible is not afraid to lift up its voice for those men and women of an infirm religion who so often vex us to scorn.

¶ Christ stooped to the little children. He took them up in His arms and called them by their names, and breathed over them His blessing. So let me carry the young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.

He suffered long with backward disciples. He gave them line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little of the Word of Life. He never lost patience with them—never once, however they might provoke Him. So let me bear and forbear.

He welcomed timid and doubting souls. When one came to Him by night, He did not rebuke his fearfulness, but took him and expounded to him the salvation of God. So let me encourage the feeblest seeker after truth; I once groped in the dim twilight myself.

He had hope for the worst. The woman of the city, and the grasping tax-gatherer, and the robber on the tree—He hated

[1] A. E., *The Divine Vision.*

their sin, but He redeemed and saved themselves. The jewel had fallen into the mire, and was all encrusted with foulness; but to His eyes it was a jewel still. So let me despair of none.

He loved His enemies. Father, forgive them, He prayed almost with His latest breath. Nothing could kill or destroy His exceeding grace. Nothing could vanquish His blessed optimism. So let me overcome evil with good, and out of ruins help to raise temples to the glory of God.[1]

1. *We may help the weak by personal encouragement.*—When men are poor, meagre-souled, shabby in their standards, wind and wave tossed, without certain anchorage, with loose, shallow, unsubstantial foundations of character beneath them, it is because they have forgotten God and have been living in a universe bereft of its Almighty King. We are babes no longer when we acquire the true sense of God. To the timid, vacillating soul, unstrung by morbid moods, lacking spiritual soundness, we must address the message, "God is near. He comes to save you." The foreign sailor or soldier of poor physique, cringing with superstition, prone to panic, afraid of the darkness, puts on the qualities of his European or American leader when there is a sense of comradeship. He is steadied by the strength of the man who shows the way. And so with weak disciples. A rapid change begins when they realize that God is at hand.

¶ Having abandoned the notion of classical honours—which indeed are not very easily obtainable at Cambridge, even by those who have a bent in their direction—the ordinary B.A. degree presented no difficulty to the always robust intelligence of Lockwood. He seems, however, to have called in the aid of the famous coach for the pollmen of those and many other cheerful days, Mr. Hamlin Smith, affectionately known as "Big Smith," whose encouraging countenance was often seen during periods of examination outside the Senate House, where he was accustomed to receive the touching confidences of his pupils, who would run up to him and tell him, as best they could, and in their simple way, how they had fared at the hands of the common enemy. "If you have *really* done three propositions," I once overheard him, with a somewhat painful emphasis, say to a pupil, "you are undoubtedly through."[2]

[1] A. Smellie, *In the Hour of Silence*, 192.
[2] A. Birrell, *Sir Frank Lockwood*, 29.

O Christian man deal gently with the sinner—
  Think what an utter wintry waste is his
Whose heart of love has never been the winner,
  To know how sweet it is—
Be pitiful, O Christian, to the sinner,
  Think what a world is his!

He never heard the lisping and the trembling
  Of Eden's gracious leaves about his head—
His mirth is nothing but the poor dissembling
  Of a great soul unfed—
Oh, bring him where the Eden-leaves are trembling,
  And give him heavenly bread.

As Winter doth her shrivelled branches cover
  With greenness, knowing spring-time's soft desire,
Even so the soul, knowing Jesus for a lover,
  Puts on a new attire—
A garment fair as snow, to meet the Lover
  Who bids her come up higher.[1]

2. *We may help the weak by making their ways smooth.*—Many name their righteousness in negative terms—they are not thieves, libertines, liars, or drunkards, and therefore they are right with God. But Christianity is positive. When man is enjoined to keep himself unspotted from the world, he is commanded to defend his brother. He is judged by what he leaves undone, and not only by what he does. Though he never placed a stone of stumbling on the highway, he yet is keeper of the road on which his fellows travel. Our task of helping those who are ready to perish must be worked at from two sides. If we neglect the duty of personal succour, encouragement, admonition, some may perish because of our selfish slackness; and the same result may also follow if we forget to consummate our work for the weak by improving the conditions in which they have to move, and making our part of the world an easier sphere for the practice of virtue and godliness.

¶ Here is a poor suicide, who, in a frantic moment in some wretched room to-day, does that most cowardly and miserable sin, and with the pistol or the poison flees from the post where God had put him. You never saw the man. He never heard of you. Have you anything to do with his miserable

[1] Alice Cary, *Plea for Charity*.

dying? If you have cheapened life; if you by sordidness and frivolity have made it seem a poor instead of a noble thing to live; if you have consistently given to life the look of a luxury to be kept as long as it is pleasant, and to be flung away the minute it becomes a burden, instead of a duty to be done at any cost, with any pains, till it is finished; if this has been the meaning of your life in the community and in the world, then you most certainly have something to do with that poor wretch's death. You helped to kill that suicide.[1]

¶ What a gain when the path by which the sick, the maimed, the fainting must travel to their goal of rest is free from roughness, and has no unnecessary windings! The straight, smooth road from the battle-field may make all the difference between life and death to some who have been smitten down in the fight. If cliffs have to be scaled and mountain ranges crossed, the hale and strong may be able to bear it, but it is torment to their less vigorous comrades, and may be fatal. The straight path for the wasting flock of the shepherd means escape from the jackals and vultures. The straight path for an army moving through a strange land means victory, whilst the crooked and the devious path may mean decimation and overthrow. And the straight path in the Kingdom of God means this and more. But for the weariness of the way the pilgrim soul would not be tempted into scenes of jeopardy.[2]

¶ Yes, the actions of a little trivial soul like Hetty's, struggling amidst the serious, sad destinies of a human being, *are* strange. So are the motions of a little vessel without ballast tossed about on a stormy sea. How pretty it looked with its parti-coloured sail in the sunlight moored in the quiet bay!

"Let that man bear the loss who loosed it from its moorings."

But that will not save the vessel—the pretty thing that might have been a lasting joy.[3]

¶ To-day there is one danger in the road which causes more to stumble than all other dangers. That danger is drink. It does more than anything else to fill the gaol, and to bring men to the workhouse, and to send men to lunatic asylums, to deprive little children of their food, of their education and even of their clothing; it brings cruelty more often than anything else within the sacred circle of domestic life. What are we, the keepers of the road, doing to clear the highway of that danger, so that the weak may walk in safety?[4]

[1] Phillips Brooks.
[2] George Eliot, *Adam Bede*.
[3] T. G. Selby.
[4] Archbishop Temple